

Femme Fatales

Spring 1993

OF THE FILMS

\$5.50
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TRACI LORDS

SLASHING HER
X-RATED IMAGE
WITH HORROR

ROBEY
DEE WALLACE STONE
RAQUEL WELCH
SUZANNE SLATER
DEBRA LAMB



Femme Fatales

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VOLUME 1 NUMBER 4

"The Lascivious Ladies of Horror, Fantasy & Science Fiction"

SPRING, 1993

Well, sales of issue #3 shot "through the roof," prompting speculation that the magazine may eventually go bi-monthly. Realizing our goals are conservative, addresses are exclusively posing for photos that personally their femme fatale physical attraction. But at least one book chain, which branded the female anatomy as "objectionable," is still reluctant to carry us; however, the same distributor had no problem with a semi-nude Sharon Stone, who graced the front cover of *Vanity Fair*'s spring issue. "Up until 1980, Stone was working in B-pictures," explained Monique Gabrielle. "Now that she's mainstream, her nudity is declared admissible." Let's face it, BASIC INSTINCT—her breakthrough film—is an expensive B-movie, but if it had been made on a B-budget, I doubt Stone would have been thrust into the limelight. Granted, Stone deserves her success. What bothers me is that Hollywood is hypocritical about nudity." Gabrielle, a popular B-film player, is posing semi-nude for a future *Femme Fatales* front cover. Will distributors, who gauged Stone's *Vanity Fair* cover as "misleading content" (quoting Liz Smith), consider Gabrielle's cover to be incorrect? Stay tuned.

We regret one grievous omission in this issue, namely, the work of Brinke Stevens, our West Coast correspondent and a dear friend. Brinke has been occupied with her ailing mother, precluding any opportunity to develop one of her sterling profiles. Thankfully, her mother has recovered and Brinke will return next issue with three separate articles.

Late last, The Chiller Theatre has added Caroline Munro to its all-star *Femme Fatales* curation (May 15th-16th). Check out page 52 for details.

And don't miss *Image-Movies*, enter this season, at your local newsstand. Brought to you by Cinefantastique, this new publication will cover the gamut, Stephen King movies, *TEENMATION* rip-offs, *CIVIL TOONS* animation, *Japenimation*—I'm off to Rick and Monica's. See you next time.

Bill George



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DO YOU LIKE CORRECTIONS?

I would like to correct misconceptions that resulted from ambiguities and misstatements in your coverage of **DO YOU LIKE WOMEN?** (11/3/96). The implication that Jon Fisher and I are not doing **VALERIE**, or decided that **VALERIE** would in any way be unprofitable is totally erroneous. We only decided to postpone the production until we could spend enough money to do the film correctly. **VALERIE** is currently in pre-production, starring Maria Pechukas as Valerie and Austin Pendleton.

The implication that **DO YOU LIKE WOMEN?** is in any way a remake of Roman Polanski's **AIMEZ-VOUS LES FEMMES?** is completely untrue. While I was inspired by Polanski's title and included some tributes to his style in several scenes, I have never seen Polanski's film, nor have I read the screenplay. I also salute Alfred Hitchcock in a couple of scenes, but it would be just as untrue to say that **WOMEN** is a remake of **LIFEBOAT**.

Finally, while I would be proud to take full credit for the film's screenplay, it was, in fact, co-written by my good friend, John Wright, a very talented and popular L.A.-based writer.

Jay Lard
Hampton, Bay, NY

FAN MAIL FOR LES FEMMES

Keep up the great work. One suggestion: could you let the addresses of some of the people you interview? I collect autographed photos of celebrities, and while I've found some (Monique Gabrielle, Linnea, etc.) it seems B-Queens are the toughest addresses to find.

Bob Shattuck
Cleveland, OH

I'm a fan of various actresses and I'd like to know where I can write most of them for autographed photos (including Michelle Bauer, Delia Sheppard and Caroline Munro).

William Rose
Brooklyn, NY

[We've been inundated with letters requesting a direct correspondence with actresses. While we've prohibited from revealing home addresses, we'll gladly forward all fan mail to specified females' families. Be sure to include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.]

SHERRY BOMB

I simply adore *Femme Fatales* magazine, as I love to keep abreast of the fine work those B-Queens pump out.

I appreciate you all mentioning my co-hosting appearance on **JOE BOB BRIGGS' DRIVE-IN THEATER**, but honey, not for nothing, you got my name wrong. Guess you all missed my television debut.

It's **SHERRY Dilday**, not **Cherry** I mean, **Cherry** sounds like some porno queen...tacky, tacky, tacky! Why, something like that could ruin my reputation here in the trailer park.

Love, Kisses & Six-Pack forever!

Sherry Dilday
A trailer park in Waco, TX

[Sorry about the error, Sherry, but skulls, don't under-rate us—we passed up a whole duck-to-dash **DEATH-STALKER** festival just to catch your TV debut. Do me a favor? Say "hey" to our mutual friend, Wendy MacDonold...a lovely actress and a real fox.]

REBUTTAL

I would like to take the time to comment on the fantastic Sybil Denning article in the second issue of your magazine. Her cover and story were exceptional.

It was great to find out that she has not faded into retirement. Her presence alone has made some B-movies bearable to watch. I think her ripaway bra scene in **THE HOWLING II** spoke for her physical talents. Her acting was heat displayed in **THEY'RE PLAYING WITH FIRE**.

However, the letter written by her personal manager, S.C. Dacy, was the most ignorant and malicious letter I've seen. Although the article did



Sherry Dilday, a recurring guest on *The Movie Channel's* "Joe Bob's Drive-In Theater"

contain errors, as Mr. Dacy pointed out, I don't believe the interview was an attempt to harm or damage Sybil's career. I felt it was very supportive and encouraging.

Mr. Dacy seems to think that Sybil is an A-movie actress. To dispute this, I would like to quote Sybil from past interviews. She states, "I know I'm hired for my looks, my body, my image—not for acting. A lot of my pictures were exploitation, but I was aware of that before I did them. I've made a lot of bad films, but that puts you on the map and at least your name is known...I've never had a good film or a first-rate director."

I don't believe Sybil would condone her manager's behavior. She's a professional. I don't think she would run down the other featured actresses because of some minor errors in reporting.

I wonder what color the sky is in Mr. Dacy's world? I think that part of Sybil's disappearance from the screen, can be attributed to the paranoid, rude and fanatical behavior of her manager. He obviously has a chip on his shoulder. Your answer to his charges were calm and patient.

Thanks, again, for the fine

story. If anything, I think it will give Sybil a boost.

Andrew Jones
Salt Lake City, UT

I'm angered about the bile-spewing letter, written by S.C. Dacy, that decorated FF 11/3. He savagely characterized the many fine actresses who appear on your pages with vicious quotes. Well, Messer Dacy, these so-called "starlets" have worked hard, long years to get the celebrity statue they've achieved. They have the ability and ambition to perform in one movie after another.

And to correct a few of Dacy's own "brain-dead mistakes" Joe Bob Briggs played Rebecca Ferratti as *11th* on a list of "perennial favorites who don't work yearly," and split the "B-Movie Queen of the Decade" crown between Sybil Denning and Linnea Quigley.

If Sybil is ready to make her big comeback, she should separate from her personal manager. He unthinkingly hurts Sybil and her credibility, as both a respectable actress and a caring human being.

Steven Milles
Henderson, NV

RAVES FOR ROCHON

I just wanted to extend my compliments to Debbie Rochon on her **DO YOU LIKE WOMEN?** contribution to FF #3. The femme fatale-turned fledgling-freelancer provided an extremely insightful look inside the world of low-budget filmmaking, and deserves to be commended for the vividness and irreverence she brought to the piece. Accompanied by some eye-opening photography, Rochon's diary proved to be a well-written insider's account. I hope that we'll be seeing more pieces of this caliber, which involve a participant in the filmmaking process, as well as more from the pen of Ms. Rochon. She took what could have easily turned into a sexist and misogynist piece, and turned it into a ribald and revealing look at the making of an erotic comedy.

Carson Dyle
Los Angeles, CA

ATTRACTIONS F A T A L E

By Steve Biodrowski

◆Director/producer Jen Wynorski (*Femme Fatales* 1 & 2) recently wrapped **FULL CONTACT II**, "a kidnapping movie set on the moon." The newish Pamela Rino (*SINS OF DESIRE*) plays Maria, a stripper who performs in an "exotic lunar club" (owned by Wynorski in a cameo appearance) ◆**DARK UNIVERSE**, described as "THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON meets THE CREEPING UNKNOWN," is currently in post-production. The Florida-based thriller, produced by Fred Olen Ray (*Femme Fatales* 1-1), stars actress/dancewoman Blake Pickett (**THEY SILENT, VAMPIRE TRAILER PARK**) ◆**Phobic** filmmaker Mike Trinzano wrapped three films that are scheduled for '93 release: **THE FLESH MERCHANT** (crashing the white-slavery market), **FEAST** (suburban cannibals share a "taste" for beautiful women), and **THE SUMMONED** (bored housewife conjures up a demon lover). Michelle Bauer (*Femme Fatales* 1-1) is featured in **THE FLESH MERCHANT** and **THE SUMMONED**, her **SUMMONED** co-star, Ashlie Rhey, previously posed for Playboy and has played minor roles in feature films. "Ashlie is no 'sleazebag queen'" explained Trinzano. "She's a new grade of B-movie star. Beautiful but enigmatic, very

interactive with the story...not just decorative." Trinzano has already cast Rhey in his "erotic vampire thriller," scheduled for a summer shoot ◆She nursed a "ton of darkness" in **TO DIE FOR** 2, and inherited a killer libido in this year's **CHILDREN OF THE CORN 2**. In her third genre film, Pickett Allen supervises a creepy trip for underprivileged tots, but this time around, it's not the kids who get under her skin. It seems the unhappy campers are bedeviled by bloodsucking, mutant **TICKS**. "In North Carolina, where we shot **CHILDREN OF THE CORN 2**, we had lots of problems with insects, especially ticks. Now, I'm in a film about ticks! I don't know what that means about the way my career is going," laughed Allen, who got director Terry Randel out of a jam when she approved the **TICKS**



Ashlie Rhey stretches out beyond "decorative" roles. She recently wrapped **THE SUMMONED**. Up next: an "erotic vampire thriller."

took of the last minute: "I got a call from my agent, saying they were on location and needed a replacement. So I'm racing in my car and trying to talk on the car phone. My agent read me the title of the script, and I thought she said, 'TITS' I said, 'Are you sure you think I should be in this movie?'"

◆Veteran villain Sarah Douglas (**SUPERMAN II**, **CONAN THE DESTROYER**, et al.) plays a sinister scientist in **RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD III**, supported by newcomer Pat Reyes (*Playboy's* Miss November, 1990). "I loved the script," smiled Reyes, "because it wasn't your typical cut-up, chinless horror film. It had a love theme to it and I'm a romantic." Reyes, who previously appeared in videos and commercials, makes her movie debut as "a beautiful zombie." "I only get slightly buried," she explained, "so you don't see me in full, goony zombie makeup."

Douglas described her role as "certainly mean," adding "I've never done any shaving of body parts; this is my first for that. There are all these actors who go around saying, 'You shouldn't do films that are violent.' Well, I realized last week—as I was putting a drill bit through somebody's head—that, obviously, I was doing one of those films but this is all ghouls and monsters. It's so far beyond anything that's real. I don't feel badly about doing that."

◆Dard Lynch's daughter, Jennifer, recently helmed **BOING HELENA**, Sherry Fenn, who was absent from the senior Lynch's

TWIN PEAKS theatrical film, plays the provocative title role. "I met a man, explained Ms. Lynch, who had an idea and was looking for a female writer to develop the story, and write the screenplay, about a man so obsessed with a woman named Helena that he cuts off her arms and legs and puts her in a box. What intrigued me was that I didn't see it as an act of violence, or a horror film. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be great if she lost her arms and legs and it didn't matter to her—if she could somehow talk herself into believing she wasn't going to let him win this way?'"

Lynch claimed that when she showed the script to her father, who launched his own career with **BRASSERHEAD**, "he freaked out." So did the MPAA, which branded the film with an NC-17 rating. Trimming three seconds from a love scene failed to garner an R. Ms. Lynch is challenging the board with a petition, she accumulated signatures from Sundance Film Festival audiences, who regard the movie's NC-17 rating as "harsh" and "an overreaction."

◆After barnstorming in **ROADHOUSE** and martial arts mayhem in **POINT BREAK**, Julie Michaels made her genre debut in **Full Moon's DR. MORDRED**. The actress was guided by the television directing duo, Albert and Charles Bend. "Wouldn't you like to do something with your Dad like that?" joked Michaels. "Okay, Dad, it's the nude scene—I'll be over now." She subsequently played a vengeful spirit, who takes possession of Ami Dolenz, in 1993's **WITCHBOARD II**. Hired for

JASON GOES TO HELL, the ninth installment of **FRIDAY THE 13TH**, Michaels plays a character "who's actually out to trip Jason, to bring him out into the open and kill him. I'm not going to tell you any more than that about the storyline, because I've been sworn to secrecy." One broken secret is that JASON's release has been delayed; post-production time has been devoted to increasing the body count.

◆The 8th annual CineFest-at-Sage/Femme Fatales Halloween Party, held at Touille Restaurant in Marina Del Rey, proved a considerable success. Magazine contributions mingled with actresses Blaine Baren (see page 16), Florine Kendrick (**DRAM STOKERS DRACULA**), Catherine Carlen and our own Brooke Stevens. Also in attendance were director Gordon Heuler (**THE GIRL IN A SWING**, **THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD**), and makeup experts Lance Anderson, Michael Burnett and John Caci Buechler. The enthusiastic response may mark the event into a semi-annual convulse, with the next party scheduled for Walpurga Night, April 30.

◆Bodily Lebak (**TRANSYLVANIA TWIST**, **NOV OF THIS ENTH**, et al.) recently produced her first **SOFT BODIES** video. Fans are invited to write Ms. Lebak regarding her club and photos 605 South Beverly Drive, Suite 973, Beverly Hills, California 90212



Blake Pickett, a resident of **THE VAMPIRE TRAILER PARK**, stars in **DARK UNIVERSE**

Pickett Allen

OF THE CORN 2. In her third genre film, Pickett Allen supervises a creepy trip for underprivileged tots, but this time around, it's not the kids who get under her skin. It seems the unhappy campers are bedeviled by bloodsucking, mutant **TICKS**. "In North Carolina, where we shot **CHILDREN OF THE CORN 2**, we had lots of problems with insects, especially ticks. Now, I'm in a film about ticks! I don't know what that means about the way my career is going," laughed Allen, who got director Terry Randel out of a jam when she approved the **TICKS**

Dee Wallace STONE

**SHE CONQUERED CRITTERS, CANNIBALS, CANINES
WEREWOLVES...AND PERSONAL TRAGEDY**

By DEBBIE ROCHON



Missing from the set of **THE FAMILY JEWELS** are the non-human entities you might associate with Dee Wallace Stone. No werewolves, no pinheaded murderous mutants, no pissed-off St. Bernards, no extraterrestrials. This time out, Wallace plays it straight. Then again, straight is relative in a project described as a broad comedy, shot partially in the U.S. and Russia. She spent several minutes shooting a scene in which her character kept tripping on her dress. The director of the American segments, Rolfie Knefsky, had his own close encounter with critters, his debut film **THERE'S NOTHING OUT THERE**, skewered B-quickies that combine horror with hard-boiled. Knefsky chuckled at the slapstick antics and

Left: Cut from **THE HOWLING**, Stone gets a late scene from Slim Pickens in "At least she's naked," noted director Joe Dante. Right: Stone's latest, **MY FAMILY THESAURO**





Joe Dante (center), director of *THE HOWLING*, was determined to avoid screaming female stereotypes. In an act of self-sacrifice, Stone reveals her killer ego to a cynical public (right)



yelled, "Cut!"

Perhaps it was the goddess of the scene that prompted Wallace to glow, but more likely, that's her natural state. She exuded a confidence, a sense of control. But there seems a frightening sensitivity just beneath the surface, a boiling-point vulnerability. Wallace's homespun beauty, her interaction with creatures far less civilized than E.T., and her sense of determination doesn't quite mask a frail child within. It's as if Doris Day wandered into a horror movie, and turned out to be more than a worthy competitor for her grisly nemesis. The old Nietzsche adage, "That which doesn't kill me, makes me stronger," has made a strong woman of Dee Wallace Stone. She has seen real horror and grief in her life; she has not just survived but flourished.

Posing for this magazine, Wallace revealed a sexy charisma usually subdued in many of her movie roles. "I was a lot more comfortable than I thought I'd be," she said of the photo shoot. "I thought it would feel awkward. It's uncomfortable for most actresses being in front of a still camera. A movie camera is easier because you're connected with your character. The *Femme Fatales* shots we took were supposedly seductive, but it was like, 'Hey, I've seen the picture of Sybil Danning [*FF* 12]—I can do that, I can play dress-up!"

Prior to her high profile as the suburban mother in E.T.—*THE EXTRA-TERRRESTRIAL*, Wallace majored in a completely different form of femininity. "I played a lot of hookers," the actress laughed, recalling the days when she was billed as Dee Wallace. "It was funny, because I played a hooker in an NBC series called *SKAG*, and Steven Spielberg called me up and offered me the part in E.T.—two years before we shot it! I find that happens with big people, really big



people. There weren't any games like, 'Well, could you please come back four more times and read for another 20 people?'"

Raised by her grandmother in Kansas City, Missouri, a career of playing call girls wasn't what Wallace had in mind. Not that her early years were down-home Americana. Her alcoholic father committed suicide when she was a teenager. Wallace recently documented her troubled adolescence in *Wednesday's Child*, a book by actress Suzanne Somers which addresses the problems of dysfunctional families.

Her father's tragic death tainted her perception of human behavior. If a loved one could do that, how could she possibly trust or love anyone else? This insecurity popped up in her life, even during negotiations for acting roles. If a part was raised on a contract,



"Dee generates a kind of kooky spirit that's sexy," explained MY FAMILY THREATS director, Faye Kanichky.

she'd interpret it as rejection.

Because of her need to perform, Wallace left her teaching job and started a new career. After working as a dancer and actress in industrial shows, Wallace moved to the Big Apple. "In New York, every day was Christmas, with the streets, the lights, the shops. There was so much energy. I was the first Imperial Margarine Princess," she recalled. "And I was also the Dell Comic Queen. I just changed banners." Two years and 150 commercials later, she moved to California.

Though adept at playing a variety of roles, Wallace was often typecast as a prostitute on TV. It was work, but more importantly to Wallace, it was money she needed to pay off her ailing grandmother's medical bills. During the summer of 1979, while perform-

ing as yet another hooker on an episode of CHIPS, Wallace met Christopher Stone, a rough-hewn actor whose admiration wasn't exclusively professional. Stone actively pursued Wallace with phone calls and roses. Despite Wallace's anxiety of emotional bonds, Stone refused to take "no" for an answer and

the couple subsequently became partners off-screen and occasionally on-screen.

Wallace's first genre movie was director Wes Craven's violent thriller, THE HILLS HAVE EYES (1977). Though HILLS was a cult hit, THE HOWLING (1981) initiated her link with the fantasy cinema. Wallace played the role of a

traumatized reporter on the trail of a lycanthropic rapist. "I was talking to the director, Joe Dante," she recalled, "and he said, 'I've got to find a really macho-looking guy, but one with a lot of sensitivity.'" Wallace had the perfect guy in mind: "I knew if I said, 'My fiancée would be great for the part,' they'd never take me seriously. So I said, 'God, Joe. I know a guy. Have you ever seen an actor named Christopher Stone?' So, he called Chris at home and said, 'Don't I know this number from someplace?' Chris auditioned and when Joe called him back to say he'd gotten the role, I happened to answer the phone. There was a big silence. I guess they figured it'd be all right, because they'd only have to spend the money on one trailer instead of two! We postponed our wedding to do the film."

Wallace was required to

Wallace comforts Drew Barrymore in E.T. "Budget-wise," said Wallace, "it was made for less than many of Steven Spielberg's films."





"In MY FAMILY TREASURES," said director Rolf Kuntz, "Dee drops her straitlaced, Bud Abbott demeanor and turns into Cestivo."

interact with werewolves—not an easy task, especially when her hairy co-stars were absent from the set. "Your mind has to stretch awfully far to believe that I had to believe in werewolves, because I had nothing else to work with. For the big transformation scene, which they were going to shoot the effects for

later, I only had Joe standing off-camera saying, 'Okay, Dee, now his ears are growing! Whoops, there go his eyes. Uh, uh, oh, Hee's getting taller!' It was like SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE on the set!"

Working with her fiancé had a drawback, specifically when Stone performed a steamy nude scene with

Elizabeth Brooks, the couple transformed into werewolves during a heated lust match. "I don't think the film needed it at all," Wallace said. "But Joe Dante said 'Distributors buying these things now have to have that. You can't make a film like they did 30 years ago.' It was very difficult for me. I didn't go to the set because I didn't want to make them uncomfortable. By that time we were all like family. They all knew how close Chris and I were. But, I controlled these feelings because I knew it was a job. The point is to allow these emotions to come up. Anyone who says, 'Oh, sure, I'm going to watch my husband do a naked love scene,' and not let it bother her—I can't quite fathom that. But you have to be supportive. Let's face it, that's what sells horror films—sex and violence. I don't get any gratification out of FRIDAY THE 13TH, but people who

go to see that are obviously looking at things in a different way."

Wallace married Stone and added his surname to her own. The couple were again cast together in CUI-JO (1983), the screen adaptation of Stephen King's novel. As a mother who shelters her offspring from a rabid St. Bernard, Wallace's intense performance overshadowed the checks. "When you do things like that," she recalled, "you gotta go into your guts for two or three months and it's hard on you. Chris often wondered whether it was Dee or the character coming through the door at night."

In one memorable sequence, Cuijo traps Wallace and her son in an automobile. "We were in the car shooting for five weeks—almost all improvisation—and freezing, but we had to look as though we were dying of heat. I really couldn't stretch that far on every

Wallace (with Dudley Moore) played a barroom pick-up in 18.



"It was funny. I played a hooker on NBC, and Steven Spielberg called me up and offered me the part in E.T."

film. I was treated for exhaustion for three months after I finished. It was one hell of a project."

The frothing canine monster was, in reality, five affable potches. "They were all trained to go after a different toy. To them it was a big game. Their tails were tied down, but from the waist up they looked ferocious."

Wallace and her husband lobbied to change the script's downbeat finale, which was true to King's novel. "Chris and I fought for the boy not to die in the end. We felt that after an audience suffers with you for two hours, it's too much of a bummer if the kid dies." The producer agreed, and the change was made. King later wrote a letter of thanks to the Stones, admitting that a lot of his fans were unhappy with the book's pessimistic ending.

The previous year, Wallace achieved an unprecedented visibility in *E.T.—THE EXTRA-TERRESTRIAL* (1982). The movie, which has sustained its his-

toric status as "the premiere basoffice champion," is broadcast annually on network television, an honor that—until 1991—was limited to *THE WIZARD OF OZ*. But success for Wallace was equivocal. After the financial failure of his overproduced 1941, Steven Spielberg restricted himself to a more conservative budget. Scooting superstars for its drawing power, *E.T.* was less than a luxury affair. "We worked in very cramped quarters for about four months. Budget-wise, it was made for less than many of Steven's films," Wallace explained with a laugh. "But, it was a hell of a lot more than *THE HOWLING*. We shot at the old Laird Studios, and had the dressing rooms left over from *GONE WITH THE WIND*. But there were no bathrooms. However, what counts is how brilliant the film is, not how far you have to walk to go to the john!

"Even when we were working on it—when you have no esthetic distance to



Wallace and her husband lobbied to change *E.T.*'s original, downbeat ending. They were rewarded with a thank-you note from Stephen King.

the screen—the special effects were phenomenal. It was easy for me to work with *E.T.* because he walked and talked and reacted like he really had emotions, which wasn't nearly as hard as the transformation scene in *THE HOWLING*.

"You have to admire Steven for one thing; he learned a lot from making 1941. He once told me, 'I need someone to say, 'No, Steven!'' That takes a lot for a person to admit. I was more impressed with him than a lot of directors I've worked with. He gave me a lot of good things, allowed me to add to my character. I had a great deal of freedom as far as suggestions go."

After production had wrapped, a decision was made to reduce the status of Wallace's screen credit. Though her performance would earn laudatory reviews, Wallace's billing was made equal with newcomers Henry Thomas and Drew Barrymore, and natu-

rally, less prominent than Spielberg's name.

The decade that has passed since *E.T.*'s release has mellowed the hurt. "It's hard to be a star in one of Steven's films," she said calmly, "because he's pretty much the star as the director." Regarding her credit reduction as the film's star, Wallace recalled, "I didn't

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Wallace played a drug-addicted torch singer in *CLUB LIFE*. Though a departure from her maternal image, she's not overly fond of the film.



Speaking the classic "American Gothic," Wallace and Billy Green Bush strike a pose in *CRITTERS*.





During pre-production
of **ONE MILLION YEARS
B.C.**, a blonde Welsh
donned a more contem-
porary bikini to
promote the movie.

Raquel Welch

LAUNCHING HER CAREER AS A CAVEGIRL, WELCH'S "SHRINKING BIKINI" TRANSFORMED HER FROM STARLET INTO OVERNIGHT CELEBRITY

BY TED NEWSOM

The 1950s belong to Marilyn Monroe. Vietnam and Woodstock rekindle the '60s but among the decade's cultural icons is a pin-up poster of Raquel Welch, clad in a prehistoric bikini. Unlike Monroe, Welch isn't frozen into a single decade. Her physique and Latin beauty, still very much intact, may prompt the illusion she's unyielding to time. But her attitude has radically reformed since the days she was sold as a slice of cheesecake. Welch is a survivor. In a business in which actors—particularly women—are supposed to play the game toe to line, she fought back. When Welch was unjustly fired from *CANNERY ROW* for being "difficult," she sued MGM and prevailed.

HANNIE CAULDER, Welch's cult movie, best reflects her professional transition. Ravaged by critics early in her career, Welch's icy sex goddess thawed out



"I mean, he's the pretty one!" recalled Welch about R.C. co-star John Richardson. "I looked bubbly next to him!"

into an angry mortal. She ditched the swimwear and fit snugly into her screen characters. No genre, no medium went untested. Action (*FUZZ*), comedy (*THE THREE MUSKETEERS*), drama (the made-for-TV *LEGEND OF WALKS FAR WOMAN*). By 1981, she replaced Lauren Bacall on Broadway as "The Woman of the Year."

Reviewing her earliest credits, it's evident that Welch developed some familiarity with fantasy films: *FANTASTIC VOYAGE*, the 1966 precursor of Joe Dante's *INNER SPACE*; *BEDAZZLED*, a 1967 Faustian spoof which cast her as Lilian Lust; and the "dinosaur movie" that turned her into an overnight celebrity.

The unenlightened, including some of her co-workers on the film, have assumed that Raquel Welch is humiliated by *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.* (1966). Nothing could be further from the truth. Like the late Michael Landon, who credited *I WAS A TEEN*-

AGE WEREWOLF as his career catalyst, Welch fondly looks back upon her first starring role with pride.

The project was launched at England's Hammer Films, a studio associated with Gothic melodrama (*HORROR OF DRACULA*, *CURSE OF FRANKENSTEIN* et al.). Producer Michael Carreras preferred to expand company horizons with remakes of non-horror films. Upon discovering that the rights to *KING KONG* were unavailable, Carreras set his sights on the dinosaur saga, *ONE MILLION B.C.* The 1940 film had been produced by Hal Roach and partially directed by D.W. Griffith, though most of the duties were performed by Hal Roach Jr. Contractually, the senior Roach would remain titular coproducer of the Hammer remake, sharing credit with line producer Aida Young.

The special effects of the 1940 original were effective for their time: monitor lizards and alligators were photographically enlarged, and elephants in fur coats masqueraded as mastodons. Carreras signed Ray Harryhausen to simulate an authentic "prehistoric" environment via stop motion animation. 20th Century-Fox president Richard Zanuck, whose company distributed the Hammer product, pitched contract player Raquel Welch as the

RAQUEL WELCH

"I figured if Steve McQueen got away with THE BLOB, maybe I can get away with ONE MILLION YEARS B.C."



1952, Welch turned to comedy as *Magnum*, a romance with James Dean. To marry RICHARD BURTON.

film's principal player.

The Chicago-born Welch, by this time, had been a beauty contest winner, high school thespian and San Diego weathergirl. She served as a decorative hostess on ABC's *HOLLYWOOD PALACE* and played minor parts in feature films. Welch had her first significant role in Fox's *FANTASTIC VOYAGE*, but her screen presence was eclipsed by Oscar-winning special effects. Then along came *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*; there were lots of great f/x, but the public could only remember Welch—and her bikini, which somehow shrank with every reel.

While preparing to tape her segment of *FLESH AND BLOOD*, a tribute to Hammer, Welch shared her memories of "the dinosaur movie." Unlike Sharon Stone and other stars who dismiss their B-film origins, she showed no signs of bitterness when recounting the past.

"I made *FANTASTIC VOYAGE* first. All I wanted

to do was have a decent part as an actress, because that was in the very, very beginning of my career. Then I was called on the telephone by Dick Zanuck, who was head of the studio then, who said, 'We've got this fabulous project for you, Raquel. It's called *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.* and it's a remake of a Victor Mature movie.'

"Oh...uh, I'm not familiar with it."

"Well, you look it up in this book here."

"He sent the book over by messenger. And I looked it up and said, 'Oh, my God, not a dinosaur movie! I'll never live this one down.' I couldn't believe it. I had not seen the original, though I did later on. I saw photographs of it in this book. This is not what I thought was a plum part. There was no dialogue in it. They just run around in some little thing, y'know. I called and said, 'Dick, I'm not making some damn dinosaur movie. Give me a break!'

"He said, 'Raquel, I tell ya, this is going to be so fab-

ulous for you!' 'Oh, I really don't wanna do it, Dick.' It was a little bit dicey.

"Well, you'll be filming in London for about six to eight weeks."

"Oh? Oh? London?" That was the '60s and everything was happening in Swinging London. I thought, 'Gee, y'know, part of the great thing about making movies is you get to travel to exciting places. Do I really want not to be in London in the Swinging Sixties and have a look-see? Because I'd never been to Europe before. I was in my early '20s. I thought, 'If I think you have to go for this.'

"They told me Ray Harryhausen, who was a genius of sets, was to do all these special effects. This frame by frame photography was all explained to me, in great detail.

"The only thing that I was worried about, was that I would have the kind of stigma of doing a lightweight movie. Hammer Films was famous for doing the horror movies. If you were going for strictly snob appeal, this was not a great career move. But I figured if Steve McQueen got away with *THE BLOB*, maybe I can get away with *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.* Nobody will remember this and I can shove it under the carpet. But people remembered it. I've been living it down ever since," she laughed.

As "Luana, the Fair One," a blonde Welch contrasted with the dark-haired "Rock People," a crude tribe from which her romantic interest (John Richardson) escapes. Her primitive bikinis, and the international press coverage of the film, made Welch internationally famous even before the picture was finished.

"They took photographs of me like it was going out of style, every single day. Carlotta, who designed my costumes, really outdid himself. He really made the most of this little doe-skin number that I was sup-

Posing on a set that replicated the human body, Welch nipped for *FANTASTIC VOYAGE* photographers.





"That sex symbol thing is just the worst possible mantle to wear, because everybody has something to chide you about."

posed to wear. And I had no dialogue whatsoever. Being bored to distraction, wasting around on the set to run from Rock A to Rock B and shadow-box with some invisible monster that'll come into play later, you just sort of pull bits and pieces off of it. So this costume got smaller and smaller as the production went on! And the unit photographer was just having a field day. Every spare minute it was,

"Oh, Raquel, this is great, this rock over here. The sun's just right. This'll be a beautiful shot. Oh, Raquel, out of the water, Raquel, come out of the—" I was trying to be a good girl, trying to mind my P's and Q's. I didn't want people to think I was uncooperative or spoiled because I was an American actress, because it was a British crew, with a tendency to try to make the mickey out of me. "Oh, you

know, this Yankee girl, she thinks she's such hot stuff. Let's see what she's gonna do." So it was amusing, but not totally relaxing. I felt self-conscious with this very brief thing on all the time. Then, alternatively, I would strut my stuff to make the most of it, because I figured, "Obviously, this is why they cast me in this movie." Not for my acting ability, because I have no talent."

The avalanche of publicity had its downside. "I was chided by the press. I think they felt that I was a target, because I was Miss Body Beautiful, the pretty nubile girl. That sex symbol thing is just the worst possible mantle to wear, because everybody has something to tease you about, or to chide you about. They say you're unintelligent, you can't act, you're going to disappear overnight, make light of you, ridicule you."

"But the reaction from the public to the publicity was totally different. Suddenly, I became this sort of drop-dead fabulous chick. People were like genuflecting every time I walked into the room. I kept thinking, 'Wow! This is powerful stuff here. What do I do to live up to this?' It made me extremely nervous, very uptight."

The brevity of the bikini didn't bother the former beauty contest winner. "It certainly fit the plot. This was a tribe from a tropical climate. So to me it seemed appropriate as far as the story was concerned. I don't really think it was exploitive, because I felt I was familiar with that genre. You have action, adventure, attractive people, special effects and beautiful women. And you have this big girl fight in the middle."

The hand-to-hand, scratch-and-sock blow-up with bralette Martine Beswick was a treat for the American actress.

"The Queen of the Shell People and the Queen of the Rock People had to have a girl fight. We did DESTROY



Welch began her career with cheesecake, but graduated to Broadway star and author of a fitness book.

RIDES AGAIN in the caves of Tennerdiffe, or actually, back at ABPC Studios. That was quite a lot of fun for me, because, having been a dancer, I felt that the whole thing was like a dance. Martine and I worked out this whole routine together with the stunt man. She was great fun. I really enjoyed working with her. And I thought she was very beautiful. It took a couple of

Welch was the beach-office draw in REDAZZLED, though her role was minor, she was prominent in ads.



"I was chided by the press. I think they felt that I was a target, because I was Miss Body Beautiful."

days to shoot, as I recall, or at least a full day, so it was quite strenuous. That was I think the first time, for me, when I got into the action end of it, and I found it very cathartic. So whenever I could do any kind of action in future movies, I did it and sort of lived to tell the tale. Because now I've got everything out. I've hurt my shoulder, broken my wrist, y' know, hurt my back, and done my knee and my ankle and my sacroiliac and my hamstring, everything. But I just love to do the action stuff. I should've been a boy."

Hammer's executive producer Michael Carreras was continuously on location and the stage, overseeing the production. "Michael was attractive and quiet and watchful and concerned. I don't recall ever

"This costume," noted Welch about her ONE MILLION YEARS B.C. wardrobe, "got smaller and smaller as the production went on."



having any particular disagreements. As a young actress, I think I was more wary that I wasn't getting on his bad side for any reason. He seemed very encouraging. People kept saying, 'Oh, you look like this in the rushes.' I hadn't seen any rushes, so I didn't have a clue what I looked like. It was only my second movie. And in the other one, FANTASTIC VOYAGE, I was traveling through somebody's bloodstream at microscopic size. I didn't know what that was all about, as far as trying to feel what I was supposed to be like as an actress."

The director, the late Don Chaffey, was a boisterous, no-nonsense technician who had out his directorial teeth on low-budget programmers such as THE GIRL IN THE PICTURE, and Harryhausen's previous film, JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS. But lest he be categorized as "only an action director," it should be pointed out that he directed Disney's moving version of GREYFRIARS BOBBY (1961).

"Don was a real character, a macho man, sort of gruff. The crew loved him. He was out there in his shorts in the middle of the snow, and I was out in my little bikini in the middle of the snow, freezing to death through half the movie. In fact, I had to have my tonsils removed when I came back from shooting. I'd gotten such severe tonsillitis because it was so cold. The crew had fires burning beneath the cameras to keep the mechanisms from freezing and I was out there in nothing."

"People don't realize that when you have this kind of budget going, and the



The "Body Beautiful." By 1966, Welch was showing an audience of writers as an author at the American Bookwriters' Association.

schedule, you simply have to shoot. You cannot feel bad. It can't be too cold or too hot. You just have to go out there. That's the tough part. I had really a tough physical thing to do. The hours were difficult. We were shooting natural light and had to be up at three or four o'clock in the morning, ready to shoot at eight in the freezing and early light."

"Don was inscrutable. He seemed rather rough and tumble. Then, when I saw the completed film, I realized he knew exactly what he was doing. I remember one incident in the movie when I felt, 'I don't have anything to say, but this intimate scene is coming up between John Richardson and myself, I'd like to make the most of it, to get some sympathy for the character.' So I went to Don and started to talk with him about the motivation of the character. I was very earnest."

"He said to me, 'Yes, yes, well, that's very interesting, but what I'd like you to do is, I'd like you to start at Rock A over there, and when you get to Rock B, just turn and look this way and smile. John will be right over here.'"

"I thought, 'I see. I'm just trying too hard.' I remember thinking, 'There's nothing I can do to imbue this role with anything.' I was just not ready to accept that there was not any more substance to this role than there was. But he did a very nice job of photographing me. The camera is the director's eye and he was very sympathetic to 'Luana' in her more vulnerable moments. He was nice with me. So I ended up thinking, 'This rather gruff character was really quite sensitive underneath it all. He just didn't want to let me know it.'"

"It was approximately four or five weeks and then



we shot a couple of weeks back in the studio at ABPC [Associated British Production Center at Elstree]. I was happy to be back on the sound stage. My two children were tiny then, Damon and Tahnee. They were just little tots. And they were waiting at the pensions, with the nanny. A wild thing altogether."

The final result pleased her. "They were very precise about the special effects sequences, because they had already choreographed exactly how the monsters were going to move and what was supposed to happen. They told us exactly where our eyelines were, what we were supposed to do. Now we were supposed to thrust a spear, now the pterodactyl was coming closer, this type of thing. When you're doing it, it just seems so ridiculously silly and you kept thinking, 'Mama, what a business. What have I got-

ten myself into?' You felt like a fool, quite frankly."

"I thought it was a pretty well-done movie. Hammer has a certain budget, a certain look they're trying to achieve and they do a good job with it. It's not *GONE WITH THE WIND*; it's not a David Lean movie, but it's good for what it is. Relatively speaking, I liked the way it ended up."

"ONE MILLION YEARS B.C." started a whole trend which is still going on today. I had a choice to go with the flow, or try to go upstream. My initial reaction was to try to reverse it, try to find another role to balance it out. When I realized that was going to be extremely difficult, I didn't have a choice in the matter. I would have to take things that this particular beginning spawned and make the best out of it and hope that, little by little, I would be able to broaden the dimensions of the parts I played

or be able to give other qualities that were more than the bearskin chamois bikini."

Coincidentally, Welch acted in four films with Christopher Lee, the Hammer veteran best known for his Dracula roles. The couple was cast in *THE THREE MUSKETEERS* and its sequel, *THE FOUR MUSKETEERS*. Lee also played a gunsmith opposite Welch's *HANNIE CAULDER*, and both filmed separate cameos in *THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN*.

"Christopher and I became good friends at one point, when I was living in London. He was the quintessential Dracula, quite an elegant, sensual Dracula, I thought. I was quite surprised to find that he was quite 'The Gent.' I thought that was just an act. He was quite like Dracula," she laughed. "He and his wife Gitta were very nice people; we became rather friendly."

Welch has never played a "heavy," and had not even considered it until recently. "I have this silly idea that most actors want their characters to be sympathetic to the audience. But I've found out that in the last couple of decades, sympathies go with the more venal instincts," she chuckled.

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Welch played a dominatrix in *THE MAGIC CHRISTIAN* (1960).





"Marilyn Monroe is my favorite femme fatale. But Sharon Stone is the modern icon of sexuality... she's fiercely independent, in control."



Surviving Killer Robots, Stalkers & Stereotypes

"ANOTHER KIM BASINGER?" NAAAH. SUZANNE SLATER IS IN A CLASS BY HERSELF; CANDID, COMICAL AND IN CONTROL

BY TED NEWSOM

Just when you figure Suzanne Slater for a prototypical dumb blonde, she'll reveal an introspective side that will make her seem very vulnerable. When you think you've pegged her for a cynical show biz veteran, she'll say something that reflects her old-fashioned Midwestern value system. And when you're sure that you're dealing with a straightforward, intelligent professional, Slater will say something that would make even Grace Allen scratch her head.

Like the James Woods episode.

The *Femme Fatales* writer had arranged for a neontime interview at Du-Pars, a coffee shop in Studio City. It also serves as a hangout for film industry types with nothing to do except suck up java and eardrum the trades. After promising not to be late, the writer pulled into the parking lot a couple of minutes after twelve. He saw actor James Woods leaving the coffee shop, looking a bit pumuked, then relieved as he acknowledged the looks from others ("Hey, isn't that James Woods?" was the expression on their faces).

Suzanne Slater sat waiting near the door, her bright blonde hair cascading onto her shoulders, a tight pair of well-favored

jeans and red sweater accentuating her head-turning figure. She smiled an admonition for the tardiness, then explained, "I didn't know what you looked like and there was this guy standing there who saw me stifle a yawn. He said, 'Are you sleepy?' and I said, 'Oh, no—are you Ted?' He said so and then walked out. It was only after I asked him that I realized that it was James Woods. He's one of my favorite actors, especially in *THE UNION FIELD*, where he was so crazy."

Being mistaken for a movie star by a beautiful blonde might be slightly more flattering, if it were not a movie star who made his reputation playing in-



"My *M4D TWISTER* scenes with Erik Ham (Jop) helped me understand why women are so attracted to one another. They're actors, gosh!" Slater's co-stars included Telly Savell and Nels Van Patten (bellye).



tease, rock-marked geek-out crazies.

She established early on that, no, she was not related to either Helen (SUPER-GIRL) Slater nor Christian (KUFFS) Slater "...though I've thought about it, when people ask. Maybe I should just go along with it...I might get better tables in restaurants..."

She spent several years in the trenches, doing hit parts, walk-ons, and a lot of "under-fives"—that is, parts with less than five lines. But her visibility in the Jim Wynorski "killer-robot" flick CHOPPING MALL, a featured role in the exploitation thriller CARTEL and her recent starring role in Fred Glen Ray's sex-and-death opus MIND TWISTER, have spoiled her for lesser roles. She'd been most frequently hired as window dressing, a pneumatic babe to bounce through a hot tub scene or lounge by a pool, portraying a lot of what she classifies as "topless bimbo stuff," but

"I'm not proud of CHOPPING MALL. Because of it, I'm falsely linked to a damned 'across quays' title."

"You have to be a better actress to be good in a B-movie. You don't have the luxury of time, to do take after take until you get it right."



"CARTEL is my best role to date. I was mean, then decorative, I was a character. I was literally and liberally bruised after shooting."

draws the line now.

"Some of that stuff was fun, like REAL MEN, with Jim Belushi, who was a great guy and a gentleman, a very good actor. But I don't want to be the topless bimbo. Leave that to the 20-year-old Playboy centerfolds. I want to concentrate on leads or second leads."

Interestingly, she had no plans to become an actress and certainly not a "B-Queen." Born in Nebraska, she grew into a shy and plump teenager.

"When I was in high school, I was fat. I weighed about 140, I guess, and I was five-seven. I see pictures of myself at that age and I see this chunky little girl. I never got asked out. I never went to any of the dances. If I could talk to her—myself at 15—I'd say, 'Stop wasting so much time feeling sorry for yourself and do something.' I changed that the summer before senior year in high school."

"So I came back and suddenly all these good-looking

guys were asking me for dates. That was great—because now I was in the position of saying, 'No' to all these guys. It hurt. It hurt a lot. Unless your family had money, or you were very pretty, you didn't get on the cheerleading squad or in the 'right' groups or anything of that nature."

Her gaze focused pensively on the busy-burly of the coffee shop and perhaps back into time and a high school hallway in Nebraska. Her full lips closed tightly a moment. "Maybe that prepared me for Hollywood. It's the same way, isn't it? You're either born to the clique, or..." She flashed her even smile and laughed. The introspection was to be put aside.

After a year at the University of Nebraska in Omaha, she worked as a flight attendant for the MGM Grand airline, which specialized in short-run celebrity flights "Steve Martin, for instance, was very quiet. I remember seeing Warren Beatty and

when he asked for a magazine, I brought them to him and said, 'You know, my mother is a big fan of yours.' As I said that, I realized that probably wasn't the best compliment to give him. Robert De Niro flew on the line, too. He'd always wait in a car until just before take-off, which I thought was very weird, but he obviously just wanted his privacy. A very private person...but hey, he...ahem... 'dated' all the flight attendants." A pause, nicely timed, followed by a laugh and then, "All except me."

A chance meeting with an agent at an airline party almost started her career. "He said, 'I bet I can get you your SAG card in a month.' And he was right—I got a small part in a MIKE HAMMER episode as a pool hall girl. I got \$600 for a day's work and joined the Screen Actors Guild. That's when I decided to be an actress. Great money and fun work. So I quit my job as a stewardess—and I ended up not getting another job for a whole year." What followed was a lot of the "topless bimbo stuff," including brief work in SAVAGE STREETS, the TV shows BROTHERS and DAYS OF OUR LIVES, and short-lived comedy shows like NEARLY DEPARTED with Eric Idle and TRIAL AND ERROR with Paul Rodriguez.

After playing in a promo reel for a never-finished project called TROUBLE-MAKER RAPIDS, she auditioned for a feature planned by the same production team, a crime thriller called CARTEL. But prior relationships didn't mean immediate acceptance. "Carol Roesi was executive producer and I don't think she thought I could do the role."

Slater paused, studying the hot omen soup in front of her before continuing the story. "Ronnie Hader, the producer, thought I could do it. I hung in there and it worked out. And I was glad, because it was a great role,



with a lot of changes to go through. In the story, I see my child killed, I get raped. There was anger, fury." Again, she looked away. "A lot of pent-up rage came out in that."

Rage and fury are not reflected in the bright smile she gives to dismiss that memory. There are deep waters here and Slater clearly does not wish to swim in them during lunch. Instead, she pulled out a Xeroxed review of the film from the trade papers with a combination of pride and shyness. The review mentioned "...beautiful Suzanne Slater is arresting as the blond heroine." It's a good notice. She looked pleased.

A project originally called KILLBOTS, directed by Jim Wynorski, gave her another chance to play more than an "under-five." Retitled CHOPPING MALL, the film was shot at night in the Sherman Oaks Galleria outside of Los Angeles. That suited Slater fine.

"I'm a night person, so the shooting was great for me. It was funny, really, getting chased by robots up and down the deserted mall. And the robots worked really well. They didn't have any mechanical problems. It's so long ago, more than five years, it's hard for me to remember any details."

One memorable moment in the film was Slater's decapitation, which required the application of a head cast. Unlike some other actors, she had no problems with the gelatinate covering her face. "To do the effect of my head blowing up they had to take a cast of me, but the makeup guys were really sweet. I was concerned at first, but they said, 'If you get claustrophobic, tell us, we'll just take it all off.' Once they said that, I relaxed." Nor was she particularly put off by seeing the finished effect on screen. "I thought me getting blown up was the best part of the picture," she laughed.



"Nudity is okay, but I'd prefer doing office work than play the lusty bimbo roles."

She crossed paths with B-movie princess Delta Shepard when director Jeff Broadstreet auditioned for his still unreleased SEXBOMB, but "I read the script and politely turned it down. It was a big part, I know, but I just thought it was a tacky role. It wasn't the nudity in it that turned me off, it was that the character was pretty much a

bimbo. I needed the work, but I didn't need to be identified with that kind of part."

She credits CHOPPING MALL director Wynorski for getting her the role in MIND TWISTER, a BASIC INSTINCT-style sex thriller.

"As I understand it," Slater stated, cautiously choosing her words, "they

had planned the film for Tanya Roberts, who had dropped out abruptly. Jim Wynorski suggested me, so I dressed pretty informally and went in to read for Fred Olen Ray and Luigi Cinquini, the director and producer. They asked me to return for a second reading, to see what I looked like in a clingy dress. I read again, and that was it. We started

shooting the next Monday." In the film, Slater plays amateur detective to solve a brutal sex-slaying. To keep her real purpose secret, she plays along with a dominatrix, played by Erica Mann, and at one point becomes erotically involved. This torrid, Sapphic sequence, and a more standard but equally heated lovemaking scene with leading man Nels Van Patten, were firsts in her career. "I was a double virgin," she laughed.

"The lush scene was actually pretty funny to shoot," she recalled with a bubbly laugh "Erica, who played the bad girl, and I were very nervous. We started the scene and were playing it very tentatively. I was thinking it was going to be very tender, soft and all, and that's the way we played it. Fred called cut. He could tell we were nervous and the scene really wasn't working. He was nervous, too. I think—uncomfortable directing a love scene between two women. So we all went into the dressing room and Fred brought out a bottle of Jack Daniels. Me and Erica both had a drink. Several drinks! My head was spinning.

"So we went back to the set and started to get into this. Now, neither of us had ever done this before, but we were both in a daze now, just wasted! Since she was supposed to be the 'aggressor' in the scene, I sort of just laid there...which is what I usually do..." Her hearty laugh belied her statement.

"The other thing was, since the scene was shot without sound, Fred was directing while we filmed. So we started the scene and we both were still going at it rather slowly and tenderly. And Fred said, 'Think of the residual checks! So here we both were, thinking, 'Residual checks, residual checks!' and we suddenly went pretty wild. I closed my eyes—and then suddenly there's this nipple in my mouth! I thought, 'Oh, so that's what they taste like!'" Slater

"I think that's why I don't mind nudity—I like doing nudity, in fact. It's like getting back at all those people who teased me or ignored me back then."



MIND TWISTER: "Fred Ray used hypnosis to cast a 'Glen Glens performance'—and some cheeky impersonations—out of me."

rolled into another fit of laughter.

"Erica and I laughed about the whole thing later. I said, 'Hey, we'll never have any problem getting dates with guys now—they'll all think, 'Oh, boy, let me get you another girl and we'll have a three-way!'"

The sex scene with Van Patten was equally odd in its own way. For modesty's sake, the leading man was slightly covered.

"Nels wore a sock," said Slater, rolling her expressive eyes. "A big tube sock. Me, of course, I didn't get a sock. I was huck naked. I thought it was going to be a lot more romantic than it was. Again, Fred seemed a little uncomfortable, very business-like. He was off-camera giving Nels directions like, 'Okay, suck her fingers, right, okay, now touch her breast, okay, over to the right.' And I was thinking, 'Gee, don't you think he knows how to do this himself?'"

"Once, I heard Fred say, 'Nels, move a little to your

right, we can see your sock.' And I remember thinking, 'This is a love scene, and he's wearing socks? This is going to be like some really tacky porn film.' Then I realized Fred wasn't talking about his socks—he was talking about his sock."

Her boyfriend at the time, screenwriter Stanley Weiser, visited the set and found this level of filmmaking remarkably different from what he was used to. "Stanley wrote films like WALL STREET and PROJECT X and he'd never seen a crew move so fast. I mean, he was used to Oliver Stone-type budgets and here was a really elaborate set, a crew working very hard and very fast. To him, it was amazing. That's the major difference between big budget and small budget films: time.

"I think you have to be a better actress to be good in a B-movie. You don't have the luxury of time, to do take after take until you get it right. You get it right and then you move on. Having worked smaller roles in big-

ger pictures, that's the only difference. The other stuff—the personal dressing room trailers, the entourages—has nothing to do with making movies."

Even though Slater's high-visibility genre roles are few, her face and physique have been attached to "minor 'scream queen' merchandise."

"I saw a copy of *Prevue* magazine, with this ad for 'scream queen' huddle gum cards, or trading cards, or whatever you want to call them. They had one of me. 'Scream queen? I mean, I've done one science fiction movie. Two, I guess, if you want to consider MIND TWISTER a genre film, but that hadn't even come out when they did these cards. And the strange thing is, I had nothing to do with these cards. I'd signed a release for the photographer when we did the stills years ago, so they don't legally have to pay me anything. But they were also selling autographed copies of the cards—at a higher price than the plain ones, of course. And I've never autographed a card in my life!"

Slater apologized—not for the first time—for being a "booring" interview, which she certainly was not. Asked about the reaction of her family to her career, she brightened. "My mother's very supportive. In fact, she and my brother both moved out here, so we're all together. That's nice. But when I showed her MIND TWISTER, I fast-forwarded through the love scenes. Mom saw those and said, 'Oh, we can't show those to all of the relatives, they'll all have heart attacks. You've got to cut those scenes out!' 'Aw, Mom, they can handle them.'"

Her insecurity drifted through her bubbly surface once more, as she asked for the definition of a word. "I feel bad that I only got through one year of college before I started working," she said apologetically. Yet she comes off as much more

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"Oh, God, I had a real bimbo mentality when I posed for these shots back in 1985 (above and below). I hope that I've evolved since then... I don't want to be frozen in those images, I want to move on."



spies, thighs, bikinis and ballistics

FOR TWENTY YEARS, DIRECTOR ANDY SIDARIS HAS REWORKED THE KISS, KISS, BANG! BANG! FORMULA OF THE BOND FILMS

By DAN GZIRAKY



Sidaris, the godfather of "guns 'n' girls," helms the *HARD TARGET* gang (left to right) Carolyn Liu, Doree Smith, Roberto Vasquez, Cynthia Brimhall and Ava Cadell

"Going into it, I felt real good," explained Andy Sidaris as he wrapped principal photography on *FIT TO KILL*. "We felt like it was time to kick back after doing seven pictures. We wanted to get a release from the pressure of having to turn out pictures bang-bang-bang. For the most part, we're very pleased with our movies, because they're pure entertainment."

HARD TICKET TO HAWAII (1987) became the first in a series of seven low-budget, action/exploitation movies that combined implausible espionage plots with outlandish weaponry and platons of beautiful, frequently disrobed *Playboy* Playmates. The formula has been a huge success for Sidaris and his wife, Arlene, who produces her husband's films.

Sidaris, 58, comes by his love of action films from a background in live television. "I started at WFA-TV in Dallas, Texas as a child star," he explained. "I was the Shirley Temple of television and six months later, I was directing." Each day, Sidaris directed from eight to ten live shows at the South's largest TV station. When WFA-TV became an NBC affiliate, he began di-



Roberto Veronesi and
Dora Serrano take aim
in **HARD TARGET**.
We've got a gyro-
copter, a Howcraft
... just everything
in this picture.
Heated Sicily



Ava Cadell once featured in the Sidaris productions, DO OR DIE and HARD HUNTED. She also appeared in JUNGLE WARRIORS, ROT OF THE EARTH (1988) and SPACED OUT.

recting news shows. "Just before my 20th birthday, I directed a segment of WIDE, WIDE WORLD, the old Dave Garroway show. I was the youngest director in the history of network television," Sidaris moved on to ABC-TV in 1960, while he also directed six years worth of THE MAGICAL LAND OF ALAKAZAM, a CBS kiddie show.

It was Sidaris' work at ABC Sports that earned him a reputation as an industry innovator. "I started in 1960, doing the old AFL games," he remembered. "In 1961, I directed the first ABC WILD WORLD OF SPORTS, the direct relays. I was with ABC Sports for 29 years, and in 1991 I retired." It was his association with sports that led to his first feature film, a documentary on automobile racing called THE RACING SCENE (1970). The picture chronicled the racing team of actor James Garner. "It was an incredible picture," opined the director, "and I think one of the best racing pictures that's ever been done."

STACEY (or STACEY AND HER GANGBUSTERS, 1973) steered Sidaris into the action film arena. "It was really low budget and funky," he recalled, "but it had good actors and we had a good time with it. Richard LePore was in it along with Anne Randall, a gorgeous Playmate. We also had Allan Lenders and Nick Georgiade, who was in THE UNTOUCHABLES TV series for a long time. It ran pretty well, but we didn't see any money. I know damn well that somewhere along the line we fell through the cracks financially on that."

Former Playboy centerfold Anne Randall wasn't the filmmaker's first choice for Stacey. "I wanted Victoria Vetri [WHEN DINOSAURS RULED THE EARTH], admitted Sidaris. "I liked her a lot, but she was flaky. The other girl I really wanted was Claudia

"The ones that look down their noses at us are the guys just out of U.S.C., walking around with nine scripts under their arms and trying to have a meeting. We don't give a damn about what they think."

Jennings (GATOR BAIT), the young lady who was killed. She was a terrific actress, probably the best actress to come out of the Playboy mold. The one girl who wanted to do the picture worse than anything was Angie Dickinson, but we didn't have the \$25,000 to pay her. If we'd had Angie, of course, we would have had a smash. Anne Randall wasn't a very good actress, but she was athletic, which was why I liked her. She could jump and run and shoot and do stuff like that. She did one or two other things. In fact, she had a little hit part in WEST-WORLD (1973), where she played a robot. She's a beautiful girl and she looks better than ever now. I've always wanted to jump her!"

Sedaris' next feature was SEVEN (1979), starring veteran B-movie tough guy William Smith (MANTACOP) as a mercenary hired by U.S. intelligence to destroy a Hawaiian crime syndicate. "I went with a

stable of people who had acting experience," said the director. "I had some pretty good actors in there, including Barbara Leigh (TERMINAL ISLAND), who'd done a few pictures. The one actress who was a Playmate, Susan Kiger, had no experience, but she had a great body and didn't have much to do, and she performed admirably." The film has achieved a level of fame for the scenes that have been imitated by big-budget, Hollywood films. According to Sedaris, "[Film critic] Leonard Maltin recognized that we had a swordsman twisting a big sword around. When the swordsman yelled, 'Hai ya' Ed Parker, the late, great karate fighter said, 'Hai ya, my ass,' and blew him away. They did that in RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK (1981), and it got the biggest laugh in the whole picture. Maltin gave me credit for that scene in his Movie and Video Guide. They also copied when we shot the motorcycle guy

THE
JAMES
BLONDE
BOMBSHELL
IS HERE!

TAKE
A RIDE
ON THE
WILD
SIDE
WITH
STACEY,
SHE'S
FAST!

STACEY!

METROCOLOR [R] DOLBY

starring ANNE RANDALL • MARJORIE BENNETT • ANITA FORD
Screenplay by WILLIAM EDGAR • Produced by LEON ARSHELL
Directed by ANDY SEARIS A NEW WORLD PICTURES RELEASE

Anne Randall landed the role, but Angie Dickinson and Victoria Vetli were Sedaris' first choices to play STACEY! (1979). Third choice Anita Ford starred with Vetli in BEYONCH OF THE G-GIRLS (1978).

Barbara Leigh, who directed in Roger Connery's TERMINAL ISLAND (1972), also worked for Roger Vadim and co-starred in Sedaris' SEVEN (1979).



that was following Bill Smith. Bill shot him and as the man was dying, he read him his rights. That's been copied three or four times, even by Sylvester Stallone in NIGHTHAWKS (1981)."

Sedaris never saw any profits from SEVEN. "It fell through the cracks. It got the worst goddamn coverage of any movie going. I was absolutely left out in the cold and hung up to dry," he exclaimed. Twice burned, the filmmaker decided to produce and independently distribute his next film, MALIBU EXPRESS (1985). Former child star Darby Hinton and B-movie beauty Sybil Dan-

ning (FF, 1-2) headlined a cast of Playboy beauties. Sedaris described the plot as a remake of STACEY. "That picture was so good, it demanded a remake." Hinton played Cody Abilene, a wise-cracking, girl-chasing private eye in the Tom Selleck/MAGNUM P.I. mold, working on a complex blackmail and espionage case.

Much of the film's comic relief and gratuitous nudity was provided by centerfold model Lynda Weinman, an bosomy raccoon driver Jane Fonda. "Lynda was just fantastic. She couldn't wait to show her breasts. We would walk up, and she'd



This shot of Sybil Danning originally died in with Joe Bob Briggs' MALIBU EXPRESS review, but syndicators insisted on a "tamer" photo.

"I said, 'Hey, why don't we have a buddy picture with two girls . . . ?' I like the fact that our gals can hold their own with the guys, and can kick ass and take names. They're not wallflowers."

great body and gave us a lot of energy. With **SAVAGE BEACH** [1989], we picked Michael Shane to play Shane Abilene. He's a handsome guy, and he'll get in the shower with a girl and show his ass. He was a *Playboy* Man of the Year. He shows his rear end, and the women love it. It's equal time for the ladies!" For **FIT TO KILL**, Sidaris has added yet another Abilene to the family, played by Mark Barriere. "He taught for ten years at the University of Syracuse," said the director. "He's a stage actor. He's got a great body and he's just a dynamite kid." Sidaris had some problems naming the newest Abilene. "Right now, his name is Austin Abilene, but I'm not sure I like that. I'll come up with some fucking hick name—Bubba or something like that," he laughed. As it turned out, the Austin moniker stuck.

It was with **HARD TICKET TO HAWAII** (1987) that Sidaris established the formula for his next six pictures. He cast March, 1984 Playmate Dona Speir as Donna Hamilton, a federal

agent based out of Molokai, Hawaii. She was teamed with Hope Marie Carlton, another Playmate, who was engaged to play Taryn in three of the Sidaris movies. "We've used the same ladies, basically," said Sidaris. "They've been really nice for us. We've changed Hope Marie Carlton to Roberta Vasquez after **SAVAGE BEACH**. Roberta, we feel, is better. That's the only word I can say without doing a number on Hope, who wanted to do bigger and better things . . . and I hope she does." Vasquez, in fact, had been Sidaris' original choice over Carlton, but Vasquez was unavailable at the time. She debuted in **GUNS** (1991) as federal agent Nicole Justin. "The two girls, the airplane and Hawaii was my thing," Sidaris added. "I conceived the whole thing. I've always seen a lot of buddy pictures, like Mel Gibson and Danny Glover. That stuff is sensational. I said, 'Hey, why don't we have a buddy picture with two girls, two beautiful Playmates?' I felt the concept was really unique and they improved

just pull them out while we were talking to the highway patrol. She'd say, 'When we're shooting, I'm gonna show *three*!'—and we'd freeze. I'd say, 'It's all right, guys, just a couple of breasts. Don't arrest her.' We had a lot of gorgeous girls on that one...Barbara Edwards, who was Playmate of the Year, and Kim MacArthur. Lori Sutton [**POLISH VAMPIRE IN BURBANK**] played a cop."

Hinton's Cody Abilene character set the standard for the male heroes in all of Sidaris' subsequent films. Handsome, witty, honest,

Southern-accented but unable to shoot straight for love of money. "We've had Cody, Rowdy, Travis and Shane—all these fucking hick names," the filmmaker acknowledged. "All these Abilene cousins. We've carried that through every picture. Ron Moss played the cousin in **HARD TICKET TO HAWAII** (1987), a wonderful actor and terrific guy. Steve Bend was another Abilene in **PICASSO TRIGGER** [1988]. Steve got a picture with Nastassja Kinski, then he went back to the soaps. I enjoyed working with him. He had a

Playboy Playmates Barbara Edwards and Kimberly McArthur come close in **MALIBU EXPRESS** (1984), Sidaris' third shoot-'em-up movie.





"We're not like shooting *THE DIRTY DOZEN*," said Sidaris on a MALIBU EXPRESS location: "The girls like me...I treat them like ladies."

with every picture. I like the fact that our gals can hold their own with the guys, and can kick ass and take names...they're no wallflowers. When I decided to make the girls the heroes—equal to, if not better than, the men—it gave me two things, the beauty and nudity of the women, something nobody else was doing. I guess *CAGNEY & LACEY* was the only thing around like that. *CHARLIE'S ANGELS* was certainly a good example of that concept being able to work, although I can't really say it influenced me."

Sidaris' stories become more complex and ambitious with each subsequent picture. In 1991, he released two films, *GUNS*, co-starring Erik Estrada (CHIPS) and Phyllis Davis, followed by *DO OR DIE*, with Estrada and Pat Morita. "Everybody's given Erik a bad rap," said Sidaris, "but he was signing autographs, till one or two in the morning, at the hotels in Vegas where we were shooting. He'd get mobbed, but always remain a real

gentleman, I must tell you." The director's latest release, *HARD HUNTED* (1992), takes the usual elements of espionage, weaponry and action vehicles to new extremes. "We've got airplanes, a gyrocopter, a Hovercraft, jet skis, motorcycles...just everything in this picture," Sidaris boasted. "That's one of the things we do which I think really helps our films and keeps them moving. We're able to spike up James Bond-type films by giving them a lot of hardware, as well as some nudity and some sex. We can't fake the action of the James Bond films. We don't have \$45 million. Our ladies, we think, are more beautiful than the Bond ladies...and they show their stuff. Maybe they can build a set on the biggest stage at Pinewood Studios and put in a full-sized submarine and 3,000 extras. We might only have 20 extras, but we'll have our beautiful ladies, too."

Besides regulars Speir, Vasquez, and whichever Abilene cousin is along for

the ride, Sidaris uses a repertory of regular supporting players. *Playboy* model Lisa Londen was cast as Rocky, the owner of a Hawaiian restaurant that often serves as an operations base for the Abilenes; her character, introduced in *SAVAGE BEACH*, was killed off the following year in *GUNS*. Stunning red-head Cynthia Bromhall has been heard singing the title songs in *GUNS* and *DO OR DIE*, her agent/lounge sing-

er managed the late Rocky's restaurant. Male co-stars included hunky Bruce Penhall, John Aprea, Guich Kosci, Oriental villain Alex Leong and South American boxoffice idol Rodrigo Obregon. Tony Peck (son of Gregory) and R.J. Moore (son of Roger) both debuting in *HARD HUNTED*, joined the cast of regulars. Sidaris broke the Playmate tradition by casting Julie Strain (FF 12), 1992's *Penthouse* Pet of the Year, in *FIT TO*

1973: Phyllis Davis stole scenes from *TERMINAL ISLAND* co-star Tom Selleck. The B-Queen made a comeback in Sidaris' *GUNS* (1990).



KILL. "She's gonna be the bad girl. She's an unbelievably well-built girl, quite a body," Sidaris said.

In addition to directing, Sidaris writes his own scripts. "I can usually write a script in four days," he claimed. "I just sit down and scribble on a piece of paper—yellow pad and pencil. I always say, 'That's the way Hemingway wrote.' Unfortunately, I wrote like Margaux Hemingway, not Ernest. I sit around my pool like a Hollywood guy, knock those guppies out, and give them to a kid who types them up and puts them into English. I hate to be around computers. I bounce ideas off people I work with and Arlene rewrites them here and there, makes them make sense. She puts them into a coherent format. I just kuck ass and take names in my movies." Arlene Sidaris produced ABC's THE HARDY BOYS/NANCY DREW MYSTERIES, so she knows her way around a good mystery script.

"I don't like the kind of picture where the women

"We're able to spike up our films by giving them a lot of hardware, as well as some nudity and some sex. We can't fake the action of the James Bond films . . . we don't have \$45 million."



Vasquez, Spier and Strimball guest Erik Estrada with GUNS. Sidaris's villain was killed, but the actor played a hero in the sequel.

Hope Marie Carlton (NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 4) resigned from the Sidaris troupe after SAVAGE BEACH.



are always in jeopardy and guys are stabbing them," Sidaris said. "We did a little of that in HARD TICKET TO HAWAII, with Dena being attacked by Rodrigo Obregon, but we knew the rabid snake was going to get him, anyway. The son of a bitch was gonna get bit in the face, so that took care of him. I'm not good at that kind of thing. I wish I were better at doing the classy, scary stuff.

"We've had some really great-looking ladies in our pictures. We had Deven Devanquez playing Erik Estrada's girlfriend in GUNS. She won \$100,000 on STAR SEARCH and was great. Teri Weigel worked on SAVAGE BEACH, but she wasn't as prepared as we would have liked her to be. Now she's doing porn pictures, which really disrupted the whole Playboy Mansion—they've never

had a girl turn to porn. We now have a couple of Oriental ladies who are sensational. Carolyn Liu was in DO OR DIE and HARD HUNTED. She's absolutely exquisite, you'll faint when you see her. We've worked on trying to get a few African-American ladies, but we haven't been able to pull it off. Some of the Playmates don't want to do movies."

FIT TO KILL will end Sidaris's association with girls-and-guns pictures. "I'm getting close to 60, and Arlene and I need a vacation, to be honest," the director confided. "We've been working back-to-back on these movies, and the first three were especially hard to do, and then we had to go out and distribute them theatrically. The last four, we've had limited theatrical distribution. We weren't forced to do it, we did it be-

cause we felt it was the right thing to do. The pictures get a lot of theatrical play in Europe and Japan. Now, they're going to be buying them in Russia and all Eastern Bloc countries; this is all new business for them.

"Our feeling was, 'Hey, we're going into FIT TO KILL, and we're going to put everything we can into it. This is really a big picture. We've always had about 40 key people in our pictures, with usually 25 S.A.G. actors with speaking roles. By the time we get through with one of these, it's tough. You take a normal television series like RAVEN, which is on now—my friend John Ashley is the producer—and they'll have five, six or seven speaking parts, but we have 25, and don't have a budget any bigger than theirs, in fact, probably less. Of course, we go to more locations. We had 11 in HARD HUNTED and seven or eight in this picture. We shoot all over the ballpark. Since we are such a small company, Arlene and I are responsible for many more hats than most people wear. We get involved with nearly every facet of a picture.

"My son, Drew, is going to direct a whole new series of pictures similar to mine, which will shoot in Louisiana. They'll continue the old Sidaris tradition down there, but with a Southern look. Where my franchise was the two girls who owned the airplane and Malakai Cargis, their franchise will have the two lead guys owning a racing car team as their cover." The new production company, Skyhawk Films, teams Drew Sidaris with producers Brian Benne and Wess Rahn, all of whom have cut their teeth working with the elder Sidaris's Malibu Bay Films. Skyhawk's first project will be ENEMY GOLD, shooting in March and starring Bruce Penhall, Mark Barriere, Julie Strain, and Ava Cadell—all veterans of Mal-

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HARD TICKET TO HAWAII (1997) introduced Cynthia Brinshell as agent/lounge singer, Edy Stark; she also sang the **CUNS** and **DO OR DIE** title songs.

TRACI LORDS

THE UNDERAGE PORNO
STAR TURNS TO THE
HORROR GENRE TO
REINVENT HER CAREER.





BY DAVID IAN SALTER

"I've never really wanted to be mainstream," Traci Lerda admitted while waiting to start the conclusive scene of *SKIN-NEER*. "I'm not really very normal, anyway." Although she was referring to her penchant for appearing in low-budget films, her statement could be applied, with equal validity, to her entire life.

Her resume includes roles in ten nominally mainstream films, and guest appearances on such popular TV shows as *MACGYVER* and *MARRIED WITH CHILDREN*, favorites of middle America. One would assume that Traci Lerda has finally earned consideration as a serious actress...or at least see what some describe

Lerda played in *NOT OF THE FLESH*, but decided to work again with producer Roger Corman. "I wasn't interested in doing nudity."





Levin described NOT
OF THIS EARTH,
her monodrama debut,
as "my first real
chance. I had a real
chip on my shoulder.
I was really out to
prove something."



"I'll probably be sixty and hear a stranger behind me say, 'Did you know that she used to do porno films?' It's going to happen the rest of my life."

as "past indiscretions" fade in the light of her present accomplishments. But it appears, at least for the present, she can't exercise "the scandal."

A library search through reviews of Lords' movies, released between 1988-1992, turned up one unearprising fact: only the *New York Times* critique of *CRY BABY* did not attach the obligatory phrase "former porn queen"—or some variation thereof—to Lords' name. Lords herself realizes that she will never be able to escape the long shadow of her past, and has resigned herself to the situation. "I'll probably be 60 and hear a stranger behind me whispering, 'Did you know that she used to do porno films?' It's going to happen the rest of my life," lamented Lords. "It's not that big of a deal. It's done with."

Flashback to 1980. Twelve-year-old Nora Louise Kuzma's mother divorced her alcoholic steel worker husband, Nora and her three sisters remained with their mother, moving from Steubenville, Ohio to the sun-drenched shores of Redondo Beach, California. Nora's new home seemed so much more glamorous and ripe with opportunity than the grimy steel town of Steubenville. But by the time she was 15, Nora suffered some bad experiences, including an abortion. She dropped out of Redondo Union High School and hung out with older men. One of these would-be Svangalis introduced her to the world of nude modeling, and subsequently, pornographic films. She was professionally billed as Traci Lords, the last name serving as homage to her fa-

vorite actor, Jack Lord (*HAWAII FIVE-O*). Within a couple of years, Lords had appeared in over 100 pornographic films and was reportedly the "highest paid actress in hardcore."

There is some disagreement as to whether the producers of her adult films realized that Lords was under legal age. Most, however, seem to agree that the 15-year-old Lords, at the embryonic stage of her porno career, fashed forged identification documents that fabricated her age as 22.

Shortly after her 18th birthday, Lords went to France to shoot another porn epic, and upon returning to California, found her home raided by FBI agents. Enough evidence had been collected to confirm she was still in her adolescence when performing in X-rated films. The media had a field day, informing the public about "the scandalous past of America's most popular porno star." The news rocked the adult film industry. Cooperating with authorities, and hoping to



GRINDER makeup artist, Cornell Benet, said Lords' role will "force the audience to concentrate on her acting ability."

minimize their liability in the inevitable lawsuits, distributors promptly removed Lords' videos from the market. Nevertheless, distributors and producers were entangled in heavy fines, lawyer's fees and even jail time. Lords was never harassed by the authorities,

who preferred using her to attack the porno industry's bigger fish. There are many theories but no proof as to who tipped off the FBI.

Lords sold the rights to her French import, *TRACI, I LOVE YOU*, the only X-rated movie she made at the authentically legal age of 18. It's the only porn film, starring Lords, that remains on adult video shelves. The plot of the movie, which eerily foreshadows Lords' post-porno career, is far more engaging than the protracted and unimaginative hardcore sequence. She plays a porno starlet named Traci, who endeavors to cross-over to mainstream films. But Lords is hardly impressed with the irony. In past conversations, she expressed a determination to regain the rights to *TRACI, I LOVE YOU* and wipe out the final trace of her hardcore career. But lately, Lords has been more philosophical. "I don't believe in playing

Lords credits her *HOT OF THIS EARTH* director, Joe Wyneski, as "the first who really gave me an opportunity to do something."





Lords tackled action-thrillers, including **INTENT TO KILL** ("Escape or Die Young"), The cast included Yaphet Kotto.

with fate. I don't believe in sitting back and wishing that something was different than what it is. I'm not happy it's there, but I can't say I would wipe it off the face of the earth, because I don't think it's my place to play God," she said.

It's difficult to pebble into Lords' recollection of her X-rated career, although her friend Ricki Lake insists that "Traci's not trying to forget what happened to her or what she went through." Regardless, Lords has a marked tendency to deflect inquiries of her past, addressing questions with vague generalities. "I view my past as a learning experience," said Lords. "I think it's unfortunate that I still have to defend what I did when I was 15. It can make me a little edgy at times." No kidding. When Ricki Dee hosted a now-defunct TV show, he made the mistake of introducing Lords as

a former porn queen. Lords, conspicuously ticked off, lit into the TV host ("She kicked his butt," remembered one viewer).

In past interviews, Lords implied that her "grunt and groan" movies were linked to drug and alcohol. It's an assertion disputed by many of her former colleagues in the porn business, who claimed she was never known to have abused drugs or alcohol. SKINNER director, Ivan Nagy, dismissed the controversy—and Lords' lapses into amnesia when reminded of her past—with one succinct statement, "That's her personal life. That's behind us. She was a teenager when that happened. In most instances in this country, you can't even publish the charges against children because these acts were not done with an adult consciousness or adult understanding. To focus on a girl

and beat her up for the rest of her life is wrong. The people who do it are the losers."

At the age of 18, separated from the lucrative porno profession, Lords found herself adrift in Los Angeles. Looking for something that would provide perspective, she turned to drama—not the emotionless line read-

ing that passed for performance in adult films, but honest-to-goodness trained acting. "I had a lot of head trips, a lot of things that I needed to deal with," said Lords. "For me, acting was more therapy than anything."

It wasn't long before Lords seriously thought about becoming the first

SHOCK 'EM DEAD (1986), Lords' second genre film, was a *Faustian tale* about rock n' roll and Satan. The late Aldo Ray co-starred.



"I always loved the dangerous women. Lauren Hutton, Veronica Lake, Bette Davis...the ones that were fiery and out there, always in trouble. The rebels."

women to successfully cross over from porn to legitimate films. X-rated star Marilyn Chambers appeared in David Cronenberg's *RABID* and a string of R-rated quickies. But Chambers' movies were memorable only for her softcore nude scenes. Lords wanted to go the distance. She enrolled at the Lee Strasberg Theatre Institute.

In 1988, Lords was top-billed in a Roger Corman remake of his own 1967 production *NOT OF THIS EARTH*. She was cast as a nurse, played in the original by Beverly Garland, who aborts the mission of bloodthirsty aliens. Lords was aware, during production, that she had not been selected solely for her dramatic aptitude. The key art, printed on posters and video cassette cartons, depicted a scantily clad Lords recoiling from an unseen horror. It was obvious that Traci Lords was back, but the inclination to shake her bombshell image was premature.

Corman insisted that Jim Wynorski, the remake's director, shoot a nude scene

with Lords. The actress obliged, disrobing for a sequence where she is voyeuristically spied upon by a male character. Though certainly more prudent than nude scenes shot for her previous films, it represented a part of her life that she was trying to abandon; nevertheless, Lords was well aware the nudity was integral to landing a role. "It was the first mainstream film I did," she explained. "It was a very big step up from where I was coming from. It was a conscious decision, something that I dealt with. That was the first and only [nude scene in a mainstream film], so take it for what it's worth."

Nudity notwithstanding, working on *NOT OF THIS EARTH* proved to be a liberating experience. "I had a really good time doing that," Lords recalled. "I was really excited about it, my first real chance. Since I had a real chip on my shoulder, I was really out to prove something. I was 18, I didn't know a lot, and I just wanted to work and be something other than what I was. It was a nice chance to scream and run around in the woods. I'm glad I did it."

Lords lavished praise upon Wynorski, a filmmaker actually interested in her line readings! "He was the first director who really gave me an opportunity to do something," she smiled. "It was the first script I was ever really offered. One of the reasons that I was so excited about *NOT OF THIS EARTH* was that I love the original with Beverly Garland. It was so outrageous. It was so stupid and campy and '50s—it was great. That was one of my



Donald G. Jackson, director of *HELL COMES TO FROGTOWN*, greets Lords on the *SHOCK EMERGENCY* set; Jackson served as production manager.



In *LAGER HEDEG*, a menacing introduction against a surgical laser beam, Lords played a rookie cop, not a victim.



Lordi played a teen rebel in **CRY BABY**. She regards John Waters, the movie's director, as "a great filmmaker."

"The actress will have to do a nude scene, just because the producers decided they needed 2.3 breasts in the film. I think it's terribly unfair."

favorites."

Lords is blunt about which version she prefers. "I actually liked the original better," she explained. "I love Beverly Garland. I love the flying monsters. One hairy flying monster hovers over people's heads. It just suddenly sits down and sucks the brains out of someone, which I thought was great. It's very cute."

Corman was obviously impressed with Lords' mainstream debut. "After **NOT OF THIS EARTH**," she noted, "Roger offered me a three picture deal. I wanted to work with Jim Wynorski again, and I wanted to work with Roger again, but we could not come up with anything that really satisfied me. With **NOT OF THIS EARTH**, I basically left behind, in my mind, the things that he wanted in the next three films. I wasn't interested in doing nudity. I wanted better projects. I wanted to go up from there. He wanted to remain in the genre that has done very well for him, and I totally respect that, but it just didn't work for me."

Lords was subsequently cast as Dixie Love, a sexy spy employed by Jim Varney in 1989's **FAST FOOD**. "That was a really little film, and I had a little part in it near the end of shooting. It wasn't a really personal experience. It was in-and-out, and that was that. It was just a silly film."

In 1990, Lords played a supporting role in **CRY BABY**. John Waters' fondness for quirky casting surfaced in his selection of Lords as a teen rebel and in his choice of Patty Hearst and David Nelson to play her straight-laced parents. **CRY BABY**,

thus far, is the most mainstream movie in the careers of Waters and Lords.

The film introduced Lords to three people with whom she has developed particularly close relationships. The first was the film's director. "I love John," she declared. "I'm very close to him. He's a really great man, and he's a great filmmaker. He's always got a hundred things going on in his mind and he expresses them so quickly, which is unusual. He's got a full picture. He's one of those rare people who really sees the world at a slanted view, but he's got such a great view."

Lords also struck a rapport with Ricki Lake, who played a fellow gang member in the movie and starred in Waters' previous film, **HAIRSPRAY**. "I'm sure Waters hired Traci because of who she was," Lake cheerfully, "but Traci has a really good sense of humor about herself. The fact that she's a successful actress, after what she's been through, is pretty much a miracle. She's the only actress I can think of who's crossed over successfully."

Lords' harmony with props master, Brook Yeaton, exceeded friendship. Not long after shooting ended, the couple married. Yeaton, whose numerous credits include **THE LAWMOWER MAN** and **A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET PART 6**, may occasionally take his work home. "My kitchen is filled with science fictiony things," said Lords, "like eyes in glass bottles, things from movies that a friend or my husband worked on."

After **CRY BABY**, Lords turned to television, mak-

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Lorde admits she's "a little edgy at times" when reminded of her past. But she successfully made the transition to mainstream, projecting a more subdued sexuality in films like *SHOCK 'EM DEAD* (lower).



Robey

Red Hot

REFLECTIONS ON SEXISM, DECEPTION,
NUDITY, AND EROTIC THRILLERS.

BY AL RYAN & DAN CZIRAKY

Sharon Stone hit the media trail for **BASIC INSTINCT**. Madonna personally appeared on all facets of the TV medium, with the possible exception of **GILLIGAN'S ISLAND** reruns, to pitch **BODY OF EVIDENCE**. But it's likely that Robey wouldn't even sit through her own erotic thriller, **PLAY NICE**, let alone promote it.

The film is unique in one respect: the victims are all males, murdered after kinky sexual sessions with a beautiful blonde. The case is assigned to Detective Jack "Mouth" Pennucci (**UNIVERSAL SOLDIER**'s Ed O'Ross),

who slides past the red tape by consulting data analyst Jill Brooks (Robey). Pennucci discovers the slain men had something in common: they had eluded prosecution for alleged incestuous relationships with their daughters. Rationalizing his killer was a victim of incest, Pennucci is determined to track down the seductive vigilante. Turning to Jill for more assistance, the couple soon develop an intense and very physical rapport. Their love affair eventually turns into rough, painful sexual recreation. Pennucci puts his own life in jeopardy when he decides to personally unmask the murderer. Meanwhile, as the body count rises, the bedroom games with Jill grow more furious.

It's quite a stretch from Robey's "Micki Foster," the sexy but straightlaced heroine who prompted male audiences to tune-in **FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES**. Upon her arrival at the **PLAY NICE** audition, Robey had already transformed herself into Jill Brooks. "I was late, and I came running up with my pictures pasted on a poster board," she recalled. "I was wearing fake, round, plastic

FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES may be resurrected as the resident male, with regulars John D. LeMay, Robey and Chris Wiggins.





"We shot these pictures, while the city was asleep... Malibu Beach, at its most serene. The Santa Ana winds were blowing warm air."



"The human body is beautiful. I enjoy nudity. It frees me to contemplate more important notions than the competition amongst my peers," observed Robey.

glasses, with my hair pulled back and no makeup. I think I got the part because I chose to play her very shy. I'm a great preparer of things. I don't do cold readings anymore, thank God. I get a script and for a few days before (the audition), I get into the character. I eat breakfast that way, I drive the car that way, and I arrive that way."

The role was Robey's opportunity to distance herself from the "Micki Poster image." Her character transforms from timid to tempestuous, unleashing a psyche bent on SM. "A lot of people think of me as Micki. Believe it or not, I hate makeup. I have no nails and I hate my hair in my face, so I wear it tied

back. I'm a tomboy—a jock," she laughed.

Director Terri Trens shot two versions of the steamy lust scenes, with Robey performing nude in the racy cut of the film. In an alternate version, aimed at the U.S., she played the same scenes clad in lingerie and wet T-shirts.

It was the first time in her career that Robey disrobed for the movie camera. "I was a little shy," she admitted with a slight blush. "It's not something that I've done before—never, ever in my life! And it's not something that I necessarily want to aspire to. The reason I allowed it to happen was that it was put down—on the contract—when, where and how. I had a real-

ly wonderful assistant director who made sure that the camera was in close-up when it needed to be, and wouldn't let the camera 'wander' gratuitously. I'm not somebody who's going to be taken advantage of, and—I can tell you—that if I feel that something is really wrong, I'll stop it and I will say, 'No.' Yeah, I felt uncomfortable. The love scene still seems to be the touchiest thing of all...even a poor love scene."

Prior to production, Robey was informed an R-rated "cut" would debut in the U.S. and unrated version (nudity intact) would be limited to European release. Check your local video emporium, folks. Both versions are accessible on American home video. "The whole thing was a ploy," the suburn-haired actress bitterly complained. "Nothing in the film constitutes an 'unrated' version. I wouldn't allow that and these people are simply doing this, as far as I'm concerned, to trick somebody into buying more [videos]. They're going after somebody who is into that sort of market—the lowest common denominator. Those sort of people normally wouldn't go buy the movie if it was R-rated, but if they see it unrated, they might just buy it. Unfortunately, they're going to have a nasty surprise, because there's nothing in the 'unrated' version but an R."

Originally, it was a terrific script and it was completely mangled by a first time director. She never once sat me down and told me what she was going to be doing...and I would like to say that you'll never see me doing that kind of thing again. When the bell rang, we only had a few days to film it. It wasn't up to snuff and neither was she. The producer, though, really tried to make a great picture. But once it was out of his hands, the director let him down."

Madonna's erotic thriller, *BODY OF EVIDENCE*, had

the production schedule and luxuries that *PLAY NICE* couldn't afford. Nevertheless, it was roasted by critics and ignored at the boxoffice. "I'm sure that there are projects in Madonna's life that she entered into with much enthusiasm," Robey opined, "only to find out that it didn't measure up to the original enthusiasm she had once had. In the case of *PLAY NICE*, I was excited about the script and making a film, but the movie didn't measure up to all the expectations I had. It's just one of those things...not everything works out the way we would like them to, and then we move on from there."

Matter of fact, Robey sees the erotic thriller as an endangered species. Genre plots are strung on the "R-rated and unrated gimmick", with one film trying to out-sensationalize the preceding one. The "slasher" genre self-destructed in much the same way. Plots degenerated into pabulum as the genre sunk into a competition of carnage excess. "Uncreative minds work overtime to try and duplicate the success," Robey observed. "What they don't understand, though, is that

Robey cautions thrill seekers that "There's nothing in the unrated version (of *PLAY NICE*) but an R."



"It's important to be your own woman and not fall into a need, such as someone's lover or just someone's wife, but to be a very good, well-rounded individual."



PLAY MCE: Robey shot two different versions of the love scenes. "I don't think there's a lot...that's being written for women."

Hopburn is a wonderful example of a person who has continued to grow and grow; however, when some people make it, they only stay for a year. Progression, and exploring new horizons, is the key. Most newcomers are quarter horses in a field of thoroughbreds. It's true, they're quick to get out of the starting gate, but they have no staying power. Discipline, and consistent vision, is the mark of a truly great artist. There are no short cuts or substitutes for experience and life experience is what you draw from. So, as people themselves become more interesting, they can then reflect that back to others."

Robey's fondness for FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES is reflected in her prop collection. She owns the bells that were attached to the antique shop's front door, as well as "occult" ar-

tifacts (violin, Cupid statue, et. al) that were constructed for various episodes. "I think the series has helped my career," she smiled. "When you do so many one-hour shows, that's actually a lot of little movies. Nobody knows the camera better than me. I'm a quick learner and I'm a student of life and I never get into a situation unless it's 100 percent. That means I was running the camera a little bit and watching the directors and producer, learning how it all works. That's something I might want to do in the future, something behind the camera."

As reported in FF #1, Robey is scheduled to play a beguiling vampire in THE THIRTY. The movie was originally slated for production last year; however, as a result of raising a considerable production budget, especially in a tight economy,

the movie was pushed back to spring, '93. "This one," Robey vowed, "is going to be a very elegant and beautifully shot movie." The producers, similarly enthusiastic, have selected Florida locations to serve as the film's tropical setting. Also on the agenda is a remake of THE COLLECTOR, with Robey cast in the role originally played by Samantha Eggar.

In the meantime, a "photo book" is in the works. "We are doing a book of nude photographs," Robey explained, "and it's going to be a very beautiful book, juxtaposed with lyrics that I write, presented as free form poetry. Right now, we're just showing it to our friends, but hopefully it will be something that we'll publish when it's ready. It started out as a personal project. I am a feminist, and that's a state of mind more than anything else, and the actions that I've taken so far hopefully reflect that. Why I'm trying that in this book is because there's nothing wrong with nudity, as long as you have control over your work. The female body is not dirty, and nudity is beautiful. As long as it's presented as an object of body worship, rather than pornography, it's wonderful. There is a fine line there, but I don't think that anybody should go to the extremes and say, 'This is bad and that is good.'"

Robey recently built her own 16-track digital studio in Santa Monica, California. Prior to earning recognition on the FRIDAY series, Robey had a smash single with "One Night in Bangkok," along with other hits in the dance category. She's been writing music with Brad Segal and plans to record an album as soon as their work is completed.

The release of another project is even more imminent. During the past two years, Robey has collaborated with Chicago poet, Greg Beemster. It was Beemster's intention to publish his book, *Destruction...Not*

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THE NOT -SO- SILENT LAMB

VAMPIRE, SHOWER VIXEN, SLAVE
GIRL, STRIPPER...DEBRA LAMB IS THE
FANTASY CINEMA'S GENUINE SPITFIRE

BY STEVE BODROWSKI

"You're going to edit this—in case I say something really moronic, right?" asked Debra Lamb, while the cup of industrial strength coffee accelerates her already manic personality. Not the most auspicious beginning for an interview, the question soon proves to be mostly academic; Lamb likes to speak her mind but, unlike Julia Phillips, she also plans to eat lunch in this town again. Consequently, throughout the interview, she performed her own brand of self-editing, turning off the tape recorder whenever concerned that her satirical quips would look a bit too acerbic on the printed page.

The actress, who has had big roles in small films and minor roles in big films, began by expressing her appreciation for the advances women have made behind the camera. "I love the trend that there are more

women in film, producers and directors. Casting people don't count, because they're all scum!" she laughed. "I'm going to get in trouble! I think this trend will work in my favor, because I've worked with several women directors. The thing is, though, it's so po-

litical in that they're getting too much credit. Any woman who's writing and directing—it's like 'Wow! A woman!'"

Off goes the tape recorder, as Lamb decides this isn't quite the path she wants the conversation to take. After only a small amount of soul searching, the decision is reached to begin at the beginning.

"I didn't know how to become an actress, and in this town no one will tell you anything. I'm just the opposite; if people have questions, I'll tell anybody anything I did a couple innocent, little rempy things on the Playboy Channel. It's like you're in a situation comedy, but you're topless. I guess it's not too harmful to say that, but I want to be a serious actress," she frets, while determining whether or not to switch off the tape recorder, again. "That doesn't make me sound too legitimate, but I don't want to say, 'I won't do nudity, because I'm a serious actress' or 'I won't do this because of that.' I want to be able to do everything. I don't mind nudity at all—it depends how it's done."

Past the point of decision, Lamb proceeds with the recorder on. "I met some director and ended up in **ROCK AND THE MONEY-**

"In **PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES**, I was photographed for a calendar prop, along with Teri Weigel and Becky LeBroux. It was cut from the film."



"**WARLORDS** was the first time I worked for Fred Olen Ray. There was a lot of behind-the-scenes slapstick, stepping off rocks."



"...I don't want to say, 'I won't do nudity because I'm a serious actress.' I don't mind nudity at all...it depends on how it's done."

HUNGRY PARTY GIRLS, which was a lot of fun, for no money. There's a pretty funny sex scene in there—not sleazy, funny!" The low-budget entry went directly to video, but its producer introduced Lamb to Fred Olen Ray, who cast her in several films, beginning with a bit part as a captured harem girl in **WARLORDS** (1988). "I like Fred. He smokes cigars, he's my kind of guy," said Lamb. "I like his style of directing, because he's laid back, he doesn't yell, and he takes suggestions. In **BEVERLY HILLS VAMP** (1989), I felt there wasn't really enough for me to do in my death scene. Originally, I just got killed, and that's that. I said, 'Can we collaborate on this a little?' We ended up with dialogue between me and Eddie Deegen that turned out to be pretty funny. Eddie, Fred and I got together and came up with some cute stuff. I liked the way it turned out."

The association with Ray prompted Lamb's casting in other low-budget films, including **B.O.R.N.** (1988) with Clint Howard (brother of producer/director Ron). "I did a rape scene with Clint, who plays an anesthesiologist. He puts me under for the operation where they tear my heart out. In all of these movies, everything moves along. You only get a few rehearsals, mostly for technical reasons, and one take—if it's good enough, that's it. You're just thrown out there. If you stink, you stink; if you're good, you're good. Swim or drown, act or die."

"At one point, I'm on a hospital bed, preparing for this scene. I'm trying to focus in on what I have to do,

and the whole crew is singing this Disney tune—loud!" Somehow, Lamb managed to stay in character in spite of the crew's impromptu soundtrack. "Unfortunately, from what I've been told, the financial backers thought the scene was too strong, so it was cut way down and made less disturbing. It lost its impact."

Somewhat lighter in tone was the campy **INVISIBLE MANIAC** (1990). "It was **PORKY'S**-type stuff...girls in the shower with guys looking through a periscope. We're in the shower, naked, dancing to music and having such a good time, because high school girls really do this, you know. When I was back in high school, I was so embarrassed I was cowering in the corner."

"So we're on the shower set, and we're naked for everybody to see. It's a good thing I'm not shy anymore! We decided to have some-

*"My scene with Eddie Deegen, in **BEVERLY HILLS VAMP**, wasn't originally in the script."*



body get some champagne. What we didn't know was that the whole crew, and the male cast, had laid bets on who would barf first. We were all done, except for one girl who was left to do her solo shower scene. She had more to drink than the rest of us, so—in and behold!—she barfed. For the most part, everybody had guessed she'd be the one. No one bet on me because I played Betty the nerd, obviously not a party girl."

A cameo in *STRIPPED TO KILL* (1987) led to a featured role in the following year's sequel, *STRIPPED TO KILL II*. The film may be the best of Lamb's genre films because director Kurt Shea, who later helmed *POISON IVY* (1992), was a stickler for detail. "I had to do some dubbing, just one word," recalled Lamb. "I'm saying 'slut' over and over with subtle variations. The director got a call and said, 'Oh, I'm just in here teaching an actress how to say 'slut.'"

Most of Lamb's roles are not a result of the agent-auditioning procedure, but generated through association with the cast and crew of her films. Her rapport with William Shatner, however, could hardly be described as professionally lucrative. The couple became acquainted during the making of *VOICE OF THE PLANET*, "kind of a docu-drama" produced for Maryland Public Television. "Shatner is psychologically, perhaps more psychically, linked to a computer in the film, which embodies Mother Earth. It's an ecology theme. He's cut off from all human contact, but he has dreams and memories. He dreams of his wife running naked through the forest. I was bouncing around the forest like a fawn. Later, I found out that Bill picked me; he got to look at the pictures."

After the day's shooting, only Lamb and Shatner remained in a limousine that was engaged to transport the film's personnel. "Shat-

"In all these movies... you get only the time to do a few rehearsals, and just one take. If you stink, you stink; if you're good, you're good."



"After fading out I was a fire-eater, the *DEATH ROW GAMESHOW* producers spliced up a scene where I torch a mob boss's mother."

ner was asking me every question under the sun. What are my political views? What would I do about the drug and gang problems? Come on! What was I doing, running for Miss America? I'm very talkative, so I answered his questions. But when I asked him something, all he'd say was, 'No, I don't want to talk about myself.' Finally, I said, 'Hey, Bill, you have to put me in *STAR TREK V*.' He said, 'Oh, I do, do I?' Then I made the mistake of getting silly. I said, 'Don't feel pressured or anything. It's not like I'm going to come bomb your house!' I've never seen someone look so horrified. He wouldn't talk to me the rest of the way, he wouldn't even look at me. When we got to his neighborhood, he told the limo driver to drop him off in the street, because he didn't want to go into the house with me in the limo. Anyway, I'm glad he didn't put me in *STAR TREK V*. It turned out to be homage, close-up after close-up, to

Bill and his toupee."

Lamb was more recently cast in *EVIL SPIRITS*, an inexpensive *PSYCHO* clone. "Gary Graver, the director, also served as a cinematographer on the Fred Olen Ray films. It was a case of perfect timing. Apparently, *EVIL SPIRITS* was completely cast and ready to go in four days. But the girl hired to play Karen Black's daughter backed out. She didn't want to do nudity, which I understand. Gary had already seen me act, so all I had to do was convey the character's youth and innocence."

The film proved unworthy of its veteran cast, including Virginia Mayo, Robert Quarry, Michael Berryman, Artie Johnson and British *femme fatale*, Martine Beswick (*DR. JEKYLL AND SISTER HYDE*, *ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.*, et al.). "Martine had story after story about drinking in British pubs with—it was either Peter O'Toole or Richard Harris—but, basically, it

was about big stars passing out in bars."

Lamb has also been cast in more mainstream films, including *PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES*, a comedy vehicle tailored for Steve Martin and John Candy; unfortunately, her scenes didn't survive the final cut. "I was photographed as a pin-up for Candy's tacky promotional calendar," she explained. "The casting director also called me for a bit part. But instead of a small bit part that was non-SAG—I wasn't even SAG, yet—they had me do a long dialogue scene with John Candy, all improvised, because [director] John Hughes loves to do that. I'm dancing topless on this little stage, and John Candy is flustered, mixed up and unable to talk. The funny thing was, instead of reacting to him as though he's strange, I turned out to be exactly like him and started mumbling...like I do naturally."

"I was invited to the screening at Paramount. We got to the party where my scene's supposed to be, and it's not there. Unfortunately, they'd shot so much footage that lots of it was cut out."

Lamb was also hired for *ROBOCOP*, juggling dough in a pizza parlor commercial. Once again, her footage landed on the cutting room floor. "They shot a handful of commercials, but ended up using one over and over, with the same guy saying, 'I'll buy that for a dollar!' At least I worked with Paul Verhoeven, which was fun."

One of Lamb's special skills is her fire-eating routine, which she performed in a number of rack videos and feature films. She initially demonstrated her skill in *DEATH ROW GAMESHOW* (1988). "I was auditioning for a smaller role, but I told them I wanted to be the game show hostess because it sounded like more fun. There was a radio in there, and I ended

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Love plays herself as diversity,
playing a BEVERLY HILLS VAMP (below) and
posing as a calendar model (right).





THE WOMEN OF Babylon 5

**THE FORMER SLEUTH, THE EX-STUNT WOMAN, AND THE
STAR TREK FAN; THE COMELY CAST OF BABYLON 5
PROVE TRUTH IS STRANGER THAN SCIENCE FICTION.**

BY MARK A. ALTMAN

It's either feast or famine, stormy or parched, death or plethora. Television hasn't had so many science fiction series since the unlamented days of Irwin Allen. BABYLON 5 butts aesthetic heads with the STAR TREK spin-off, DEEP SPACE NINE. Both shows have been described by their separate creators as "science fiction, imbued with a CASABLANCA-like atmosphere" (the third in the current space/ratings race, SPACE RANGERS, is a would-be hip version of SPACE PATROL. TIME TRAX, an Aussie co-production, takes its cue from QUANTUM LEAP.)

Like its direct competitor, BABYLON 5 offers a galaxy of conflict between personalities and species, far from the placid worlds of STAR TREK in its various generations. And like STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, BABYLON 5 is not broadcast on established TV networks. Instead, the series has been inked as a launching pad for an independent web, Warner Bros' Prime Time Network.

And not since the spandex spacebabes of BAT-
TLESTAR GALACTICA has there been a trio, done for a sci-fi series, whose beauty can match the high caliber of their intellect. The players: Blaire Baron, Pa-

tricia Tullman and Tamilyn Tomita. Thankfully, none are buried under a layer of Martian greasepaint.

Series creator J. Michael Straczynski—whose TV credits include the new TWILIGHT ZONE and CAPTAIN POWER—has been close-mouthed to all three actresses about their roles, exempting what's on each week's printed page. "He's very secretive of his process," said Blaire Baron. Straczynski—"Joe" to his cast and to the delight of typesetters everywhere—has his own five-year plan as to how the three characters should develop. However, his reluctance to divulge much of their backgrounds allows each actress the freedom to improvise. "I'm



Though risk of injury prevents Patricia Tullman (right) from assaulting her own stunt, she'll "be able to do martial arts stuff." Blaire Baron (opposite) sports David Moore's Vanity Fair cover.



Patricia Tallman plays the telepathic Lyla; "We've got to acknowledge some of these 'occult arts' are just as scientific as anything else." Tallman consults with Michael O'Hara's "Caravanserai Sinsler" (left).



making up my backstory," explained Patricia Tallman, "but Joe reveals some of it to us as we go along." If *BABYLON 5* survives as a series, then credit will be divided among Straczynski, for creating the universe, casting director Mary Jo Slater (*STAR TREK VI*) for populating it, and the actresses for embellishing their characters with life, perception and beauty.

BLAIRE BARON

She describes the other

characters in *BABYLON 5* as "not perfect. They're flawed, they have Achilles' heels." But her own role as Carolyn Sykes, the sensitive but tough-talking co-pilot, strikes Blaire Baron as slightly less than imperfect, like a single-minded character from a *Chkov* play. "I still have to find my flaws—I think my character's perfect. Worlds are colliding and she comes into this with a completely clear head saying, 'This is what you do!'"

In a past era, the part

may have been played by Kenneth Tobey. Baron likened it to Sigourney Weaver's Ripley, claiming her character's aggression "... fit like a glove. Joe said, 'Use your instincts.' What I came up with parallels my own life, in that she had to reinvent herself. Her past, I think, hasn't a lot to do with who she is now. She doesn't carry baggage. She has no tolerance for bull-shit. Life's too short."

Baron's own reinvention has gone through several diverse phases: privileged

daughter, struggling actress and hard-boiled private eye. She has "celluloid in the blood," to use a W.C. Fields phrase. Baron's grandfather was the first American to study under POTEMKIN director, Sergei Eisenstein, at Moscow's Institute for Cinema Research. But after graduation from a posh girls' school in California, she turned her back on a pampered lifestyle and headed to New York "with four suitcases and \$500."

Baron moved in with real-life *femme fatale*, Marita Lorenz, ex-mistress of Fidel Castro. While a CIA operative in the early 1960s, Lorenz was privy to the groundwork behind the JFK assassination. Following Lorenz's lead, Baron became a private investigator. She sustained the profession between soap operas and occasional theatrical productions.

"When I started out, I felt I had to prove myself," recalled Baron, "so I threw myself into life-threatening situations." In one instance, pretending to be stoned on narcotics, she followed a junkie from Harlem to a methadone clinic. A separate case involved another drug dealer who managed a jewelry store. "I came in acting the part of a woman who'd broken up with her fiancée," said Baron with a satisfied smile. "The guy ended up asking me out, as I planned, and started going on and on about his drug dealings and other shady stuff. After I turned the information over to the police, I got a lot of threats on my answering machine."

This manifestation of up-close acting, in which the one-person "audience" is much closer than a camera would ever be, proved practical upon Baron's return to the West Coast. HAPPY DAYS, THREE'S COMPANY and GENERAL HOSPITAL are just a few of the episodic credits she racked up in her salad days. Baron also acted on THE GUIDING LIGHT, with Michelle

BLAIRE BARON

"We're less interested in exploration of what's 'out there' than inside—the inner universe, as New Agers say."



1997'S NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD was a commercial disappointment, but Pat Tallman's performance impressed the creator of BABYLON 5.

Forbes of STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION.

Her BABYLON 5 role serves as an untraditional love interest for Michael O'Hare's "Commander Sinclair." "In 'here films' and myths, the hero is victimized... then turns around and says, 'I'm not going to take this shit.' In this show, Carolyn functions as a catalyst. The transformational arc happens through her voice. She says, 'You're not going to take this shit.'"

Straczynski's hesitation to elaborate on the background of his characters, suits Baron just fine. "Joe's a little like me in that he's secretive of his process and I work that way, too. We're less interested in exploration of what's 'out there' than inside—the inner universe, as the New Agers say."

In addition to light comedy and soap opera melodramatics, Baron's film credits have thus far ranged from pop entertainment (A LEAGUE OF THEIR

OWN) to the arty PRIVILEGE, a 1990 award winner at the prestigious Sundance Film Festival. More recently, she was cast in the dark comedy, SKINNER.

As to her future in BABYLON 5, Baron looks forward to a story involving the loss of Sykes' memory. "She gets it back, of course, but a lot of interesting things happen. She'll be victimized—and she won't like it one bit! And it involves a love triangle and she ends up with some other interesting character. It could be very funny. I think it'll be like VIRGINIA WOOLF—or Liz and Dick. There's your hint. After all, this is adult sci-fi."

PATRICIA TALLMAN

The dressing room he speaks "Spartan," not "stardom" white walls, a single open window, a small table. Patricia Tallman doesn't care. To her, it's the role, the work that counts. And she's delighted with it.

"At first read-through,"

explained the red-haired actress, "I kept thinking, 'Awww, this is too good to be true. I'm going to get fired.' I actually got called in for a meeting and told the second assistant director, 'I'm not coming in if you're firing me!' He said, 'Will you relax already?'"

A long time fan of literary sci-fi, Tallman credits Heinlein's *Stranger in a Strange Land* and the Tolkien *Lord of the Rings* trilogy for reviving her college years. Like Blaire Baron, Tallman professionally crossed paths with Michelle Forbes, both on STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, and the Propaganda Films release, KALIFORNIA. "I had a great time with Michelle, recalled Tallman, "because I love her. I helped teach her some of the stunts she did herself in NEXT GENERATION. She's a dancer, so she knew how to move."

Tallman made her acting debut in George Romero's KNIGHTRIDERS (1981), but has spent most of her time doubling and stuntin' for others. "I started that 11 years ago on a soap in New York. They needed a red-head to fall down steps," she explained. "It hurt. But they paid me \$1200 and it went working in Macy's. But it took its toll, spiritually and physically."

She landed the leading

Tammye Tarras as Laurel Takahara, "I was a big fan of THUNDERBOLTS, CAPTAIN SCARLETT and ROBOTCOP."



role in George Romero's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD** remake (1990), directed by her **KNIGHT-RIDERS** co-star, Tom Savini. Though the film was a critical and financial disappointment, it opened a door for Tallman.

"Joe [Straczynski] saw it and brought me out to Hollywood. I was sitting in the waiting room, ready to audition and he came running out and said, 'I wrote this part with you in mind!' Inwardly, I went 'Oo! Nothing like a little pressure!'"

"After I got the role, Joe told me he wanted my character, Lyta Alexander, to have that core strength I showed in **LIVING DEAD**. And he doesn't mind that I'm adding my sense of humor to it. Lyta's definitely not a jester. Maybe that's why Joe had to fight for me to get the role. With me, I have to calm down—no more jokes. 'Oo! Can't grab Michael's butt, he's the commander.'"

Unlike Blaire Baron, Tallman doesn't feel any similarity between her real self and her screen persona. In fact, her character proved so different and challenging, Tallman was convinced she wouldn't garner the role. "One of those typical actor things—I'm

Blaire Baron noted a love triangle will be written into **BABYLON 5**. "This," she stressed, "is adult sci-fi."



TAMILYN TOMITA

"(My character) garners respect...she's not there on a fluke and she didn't sleep with the goddamned captain."



In 1990's **NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD**, Tallman (director Tom Savini) turns into a lumberjack, modifying the '66 version's heroine.

not good enough; they'll get someone who's really beautiful and has some real credits. No way. I lucked out."

The telepathic Lyta was pivotal to the pilot episode, uncovering secrets in the mind of a poisoned ambassador. Further use of the character, and her background, remain locked away in Straczynski's brain and Tallman sometimes wishes her own psychic ability could pry the secrets loose.

"I know there is a Psi Corps who go after rogue Psi people," said Tallman, "and I've been making up what the Psi Corps means to me. There's a book by Orson Scott Card, *Ender's Game*, which describes how they train these boys. I see my role like that. I came from a long line of telepaths and they knew I was gifted, so they put me into training where I lived a Spartan existence...which contributed to my anxiety and why I always wear long skirts and am very proper."

Tallman draws distinc-

tions between her character and the vaguely similar Deanna Troi of **STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION**. "She's an empath and that's different. She reads feelings, picks up vibes, but she can't read minds. My character can go in and see if you're telling the truth or not...when it's proper. I don't think that's fantasy, but we have to find the proper level of reality for the show."

After toiling long, hard and anonymously as a stuntwoman, Tallman has promised herself that she'll never allow her ego to swell. "I know some of the people on **STAR TREK** and other shows, and...oh, I don't know. Maybe it's because they get really tired of people accosting them. Patrick Stewart can't even go to the grocery store without being recognized."

"But me, I'm just grateful to have the job! Grateful not to have to get hit by cars for a living! That's what I did and it was hard and I hurt all the time. Now, instead of being a

stuntwoman, I get to create a character...I get to be an actress, which is what I wanted to do my whole life."

TAMILYN TOMITA

Sitting on the floor of her dressing room, she munches the remains of her lunch. Tamilyn Tomita is dressed in a white T-shirt and jeans—nothing that would remind one of Laurel Takishima's military bearings. "I'm not like Laurel at all," she said of her TV character. "She knows what she wants, she's very strong, very goal oriented, very ambitious. I wish I had that sense of purpose and direction. I'm very fly-by-night."

The 24-year-old Tomita was discovered by British director Alan Parker who cast her in **COME SEE THE PARADISE**. Executives at 20th-Century Fox ecstatically referred to the movie, about the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II, as **NOBODY CAME TO SEE THE PARADISE**. Tomita not only survived the film's boxoffice failure, but earned laudatory reviews.

Like her **BABYLON 5** costars, Tomita has been largely on her own when it came to expanding her character. "Joe gave us briefly what his five-year arc would be, and where the characters are going," she explained. "I didn't want to know. Since Laurel is second-in-command at such a young age, her record must be admirable. She's straightforward. On page one of the script it says, 'She's attractive but no-nonsense.' If one is attractive, you either use that or diminish that aspect. She chose the less-than-conventional route. There's got to be a reason for her choice of a solitary existence, within a strict, modulated lifestyle. There must be some frustration and pain in her past."

"I'm sensitive to tokenism and stereotypes. First of all, I'm a woman

and secondly, a woman of color. In the character's off-hours, they expect me to wear Asian-themed clothing. That's something the writers have to justify. There were sprinklings of that in the pilot. It's a good affirmation, as long as you're not dwelling in the depths of your culture. I'm liberated enough to say, 'No, I don't want to be submissive,' or to alter a line or scene to give it that needed freshness."

Tomita grew up with sci-fi television, courtesy of her elder brothers. "We were huge STAR TREK fans," she smiled. "Not fanatics, but it touched upon social consciousness for us, the only show that represented races of different colors and the messages that came across. Of course, it also provided us with a good laugh because it was so damn campy."

Despite the strong presence of women and minorities on the BABYLON 5 set, Tomita pointed out that the captain is—like the old days of Kirk on STAR TREK—white and very traditional. "I'm not sure I have enough faith in the human race that they'd really allow a woman in that position. After all, our stories are only 200 years in the future," she said with a dose of irony. "As for television reality, Middle America isn't going to identify with an ethnic woman in a leadership position in a series, and that's acceptable to me. You have a woman of color in the second position. She garners respect. That's a new thing. And she's not there on a fluke and she didn't sleep with the god-damned captain (to get her position), which is something I was really afraid of. I hope I can provide a good role model for my fans, for my race, for my sex."

"In this fictionalized universe, the human race is in command of the vessel, but we're not the ones 'in charge' or in a dictatorial role. That indicates a high level of tolerance and un-



"In *SKINNER*," explained Renee Geroni, "I play a whore who gets murdered." See uncutaneously coded, "It's every woman's dream." See the Tracy Lords profile (page 22) for further info on *SKINNER*.

derstanding. The whole feeling is 'live and let live,' a CASABLANCA atmosphere."

That CASABLANCA analogy, drawn by Joe Straczynski, was also used by rival producer Michael Piller to describe his DEEP SPACE NINE—for which Tomita also auditioned.

"I was up for TIME TRAX, DEEP SPACE NINE....," explained Tomita, "and BABYLON 5, which I think was the best written and most interest-

ing concept. I'm surprised that there's such an influx of science fiction TV programs of once, besides your anchor, STAR TREK. But I think there's room for possibility and exploration, for shows that deal with futuristic settings and themes. There can't be one show that dictates everyone's conceptions of the future." Finished with lunch, she graciously smiled. "Anyhow, we know we're better... so there's no competi-

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PHOTOGRAPHING THE WOMEN OF BABYLON 5

FX makeup supervisor, Rob Sherwood, assistant, Robby Lendoris, Haare Baron as a body painter, Greg Aronowitz, beauty & makeup supervisor, Suzanne Sanders, assistant, Sylvie Lavador. Kosh played by Chris Stacy. Kosh encounter set constructed by Aronowitz, conceptual designer Steve Burg. Stained glass costuming inspired by Michael Penn Poston. Shot at Gravel Productions, Van Nuys, California.

the Pistol-Packin' Playmate

AS STAR OF THE SHOOT-'EM-UPS, SPEIR SHOWS SPIRIT, MARKSMANSHIP AND A GREAT TAN

BY DAN CZIRAKY



"Andy's whole theory, in my eyes, is that he puts beautiful people in beautiful places," commented model-turned-actress Dora Speir. "Looking at an Andy Sidaris film, you know you're not going to see *BETRAYED* or a Meryl Streep film. You've just got to take it for what it's worth. It's like going to see *WAYNE'S WORLD* and expecting to see *GRAND CANYON*. If you can sit back and let your hair down, you can enjoy it."

Like most of the actresses in Sidaris' action/exploitation pictures, Speir is a former *Playboy* model. "I did *Playboy* when I was 19 years old. God, I hate to admit that—it seems like so long ago," she said with a self-deprecating laugh. A native of Orange County, California, Speir is the youngest of six children, and the only one to pursue an acting career. At 15, she modeled for print and television commercials before moving to New York. "I came back to the West Coast, and I was doing hit parts on a lot of television commercials and Aaron Spelling things. I had an agent at the time, who suggested I try out for *Playboy*. My first response was, 'What will my father think?'"

The second was, after my agent told me how much *Playmates* make, 'Let's go!' So we literally walked across Sunset Boulevard into the doors of *Playboy*. I met the editor, and one thing happened so quickly after another, the next thing I know, they put me in makeup, gave me a bathrobe and said, 'Go take your clothes off.' I had done no nude modeling at the time, and they said, 'Come out, we want to take some pictures of you.' I was under the impression we would just talk to them, and it all happened rather quickly."

Everything happened at such a breakneck pace, Speir didn't even realize when her centerfold had

"In *HARD HUNTED*," recounted Speir, "I'm wearing too little clothing, rushing around the jungle, and shooting strange men."



"I come from an extremely uptight, rigid family," explained Spier.

“There's just something about having a 4'11" Greek screaming at you to get your lines right and to push your breasts together.”

hit the streets. “I was in Manhattan,” she remembered, “shooting *Cosmopolitan*, and I was with a friend of mine walking down Prince Street or somewhere, and there was a newsstand. He looked and said, ‘Fast think, next month you’ll be out on the stands.’ I looked, at that new issue of *Playboy*, dated March 1984, and I said, ‘Randy, that’s it!’ So, we bought a couple of issues, and probably walked about another eight or ten blocks. The whole way, I had my face in the magazine, trying to read what they had written about me underneath the streetlight.”

Not long after her *Playboy* debut, Spear was asked

Spear didn't understand PICASSO TRIGGER until her 9th screening of the film.



to participate in the “Playmate Playoffs,” a weekend sporting event. “I didn’t want to do it,” she said. “I pretty much flatly refused. I had just gotten back into town, and I was exhausted. *Playboy* called me. One of the girls was injured, and they said, ‘Please, Donna, will you show up? We really need you.’ I said, ‘What’s going to make this so special for me to show and get beaten up tomorrow?’ They said, ‘If you show up on Sunday, you can invite six guests into the Playboy Mansion,’ and, at the time, the Playboy Mansion doors were very closed to the public. I had quite a few people on my back who wanted to get up to the Mansion. That’s the only reason I showed up, and that Sunday I was spotted by Andy Sidaris.”

Spear was hired as the lead in Sidaris’ *HARD TICKET TO HAWAII* (1987), even though her resume was limited to minor TV and film roles. “Andy gave me a copy of *MALIBU EXPRESS*, and he said, ‘I want you to go home and look at this,’” she recalled. “I sat there with fast-forward on [the VCR] the entire time. I remember saying, ‘Oh, my God. Well, it’s okay; we’ve gotta start somewhere.’ I saw what was happening, but I didn’t get any of the music or dialogue.”

Spear refers to *HARD TICKET TO HAWAII* as “the film that never died,” and admits that her acting skills were sorely lacking. “I would say that movie was my kindergarten of film training. I learned a great deal from that film, especially watching it, and I thank God for editors!”

Screening the film’s de-



bate, with two of her sisters, proved a blunder. “I come from an extremely uptight, rigid family, where it’s bad enough the youngest one decided to do *Playboy*,” smiled Spear. “Now she’s doing films and she’s taking her clothes off, too. Half of me couldn’t believe how well it turned out for what I had anticipated it to be...not because of the film, but because of my own acting abilities at the time, which were slim. But half of me was sinking in my seat, because my sisters were sticking their noses more in the air by the sec-

ond.”

It wasn’t until *GUNS* (1990), her fourth film as federal agent Donna Hamilton, that Spear finally appreciated her on-screen persona. “I saw progress in my work,” she assessed. “That’s when I kind of sat up and went, ‘Yeah.’ The scripts and the characters got a little better. My role was stronger. My acting ability improved and it all felt a lot better.”

Locations for Sidaris’ *Malibu Bay* films have included Hawaii, Nevada, California and other lush spots. “Under any other



"Physically, I look better, and spiritually I'm in much better shape," avowed Spier, comparing her current condition to her centerfold debut.

conditions it would be wonderful," she exclaimed, "but working with Andy—who works our tails off!—there's just something about having a 4-foot-11-inch Greek screaming at you to get your lines right, and to push your breasts together. It just takes the edge off the scenic beauty, you know?"

Spier dismisses the "glamour myth" traditionally tagged to her celebrity. "Andy and his wife, Ariane, must get together in their bedroom at 3:00 a.m. and dream these things up. What kind of punishment

can we put these girls through on this next film? You never really know what to expect, until you get a script from him.

"SAVAGE BEACH [1988] was a really difficult film to shoot. The location was rough. The spiders were bigger than our fists. We were in these little, skimpy costumes and we had to try not to act like girls. All of us girls do our own stunts on these films and we were getting cut up. That one and **HARD HUNTED** were really physically demanding for me.

"In **HARD HUNTED**, I'm wearing too little clothing, rushing around the jungle and shooting strange men. Uh-oh, I guess I just gave the plot away for the next four films! After doing so many of them, I kind of get them all confused. With **PICASSO TRIGGER**, not only did I read the script like six, eight times, I starred in the movie. I looped the dialogue and I watched them edit it. I probably premeditated it four or five times. The fifth time, I was sitting in a theatre in Louisiana with [co-star] John Aprea,

and I finally understood the movie! I turned to John and said, 'John, I got it!' 'Get what?' he asked."

The actress believes that **FTT TO KILL**, which concludes the Sadaris series, will be the best one yet. "I haven't seen any of the dailies or anything," Spier admitted, "but I think each new Sadaris movie is better than the preceding one." She does confess a certain sadness that the series is ending. "I realized, all of a sudden, I'm almost 29 years old and I've done seven Andy Sudaris films. I've literally grown up under



Spiky, R.J. Mitte and Julie Strain (*Femme Fatales* 12) are FIT TO KILL. Use these movie-in-Army-Navy shorts 'em-up series.

"I'd like to do some work... where you can see more of my craft than my body. Some day people may not want to see me with my clothes off."

Andy and Arlene's eyes. You know, when I started working for them, I think I was 22. As I look back now, it was a great experience to travel all over the globe. It was just the greatest opportunity, and there are some memories that I'll cherish forever."

Along with the tearful separations, there's some relief. Speir was locked in to the Denna Hamilton character, while her other screen roles have been less substantial. "You know why? Because I was busy doing two films a year for Andy," she laughed. "I just haven't had the time to be sent out. My agents are thrilled that this whole thing is over with, because now they can put me back to work."

One of her most prominent non-Sidaris roles was in 1987's DRAGNET. "You saw me quite a bit," Speir commented. "I was Dabney Coleman's right-hand woman. Any time you saw him, I was joined at the arm with him."

The perky blonde had a smaller role in Blake Edwards' SUNSET (1988), a big-budget bomb starring James Garner and Bruce Willis. "You know what? They just keep sending me little residual checks, so it doesn't matter who sees it anymore," said Speir.

She married Bruce Barman between production of HARD HUNTED and FIT TO KILL. "Mostly, it's been wonderful," the newlywed pushed. "I think I've really settled down over the last year or two. Since I got married, we quit going to a lot of those crazy Hollywood parties, so I'm no longer dancing on the tables! Now, I'm seriously studying acting two days a

week, and I'm going to be taking singing lessons."

In fact, Speir's 1993 New Year's resolution was to reveal more talent and less skin. "I would like to do some steady work, where I keep my clothes on, and you see more of my craft than you do my body. I know I've gotten a lot of training with Andy's films. I've seen the growth, over the last few years, in the films and in my acting abilities. I really would like to channel in on those a little bit more and put them more towards a positive direction. Plus, you know, I'm getting a little older. People may not want to see me with my clothes off anymore."

That seems unlikely, as Speir is still frequently featured in Playboy's "Lingerie" and "Girls of Summer" specialty magazines. In fact, she's graced so many of the magazine's pages that she may well earn the title, "The Recurring Playmate." "They finally did run out of photos," she acknowledged. "Now, I go in two or three times a year and pose for them. They still call, and I still laugh, almost ten years later. The funny thing is, I look at myself now and I think, 'God, I wish I would have waited to have done Playboy.' I know that Playboy was an avenue to a lot of the film work that I got, including all of Andy's films, but I wish I would have waited. Physically, I look better, and mentally and emotionally I feel better, and spiritually I'm in much better shape. I just think, all around, I could have done myself more justice, as well as Playboy, by waiting."

But she hasn't waited to



"I would like to do some steady work," captioned Speir, "where you see more of my craft than you do my body."

test the airwaves. Speir has already appeared on MARRIED WITH CHILDREN, COLUMBO and L. A. LAW. Her prospects include a soap opera role. Whatever her future unfolds, Speir's outlook is down-to-earth. She related an incident from her acting class: "They were talking about learning to be 'vul-

nerable' on camera. I'm thinking, 'Vulnerable, my ass! Try and get in a shower with R.J. Moore, a man you've known all of two weeks, completely naked! Hi, R.J., good to see you. More steam, please.' Yeah, I know what it's like to be vulnerable in front of a camera, thank you very much!"

DEE WALLACE STONE

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understand the reasoning. It was totally a business decision. He wanted it and I didn't. But, as a director and actress, we worked well together. I'd like to work with him again. We're all hard to get along with sometimes, it's just the nature of this business. You're not always going to agree."

She remains a working actress who, noted FAMILY JEWELS director Ralfie Kaminsky, "has enormous talent that's equally comfortable in bizarre fantasy or cruel reality." In the made-for-cable horror movie, I'M DANGEROUS TONIGHT (1990), Wallace was cast as a former prostitute involved with the heirs of a possessed evening gown. Appearing as a 1993 episode of FBI THE UNTOLD STORIES, she again broke familiarity with her maternal image; Wallace played an incestuous mother who seduces her son into killing her husband.

"There was some film where I played a drug-addicted torch singer opposite Michael Parks," she said with a smile. "I can't even remember the title now [CLUB LIFE]. Not a great movie, to say the least. But I just got another job from someone who saw it at 3 a.m. on a remote cable channel."

"Even if you do a project you're not really proud of, if you're proud of your work in it—and you do the best you can—you never know when it's going to pay off, or how."

Dee Wallace Stone feels that everything happens when it's supposed to happen. To underline that, there's a framed document on the wall of her home. It's a call sheet from the July 17, 1978 episode of CHSPB.

RAQUEL WELCH

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"Everyone has these things underneath the surface. If you're a bad girl, or show that you're self-serving and capricious, it fulfills a need on the part of the audience to see that acted out."

In retrospect, knowing the outcome of ONE MILLION YEARS B.C., would she do it again?

"I think ignorance is bliss. Had I been more sophisticated and maybe been less



Victoria Wahl, the original choice of director Andy Sidaris is play STAGEY.

struck with the spirit of adventure, I would've said, 'No, no.' And then maybe I wouldn't even be here today. Because that was the crazy, wonderful, silly but still classic film that made me into 'Raquel Welch,' and gave me the opportunity to make the other over 30 films that I made in my career. It started me off. So I guess Dick Zerkus was right."

SUZANNE SLATER

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intelligent than she believes herself to be. The apparent confidence she has in her own beauty masks a similar dishonesty.

"I've thought about it a lot, and tried to psychoanalyze myself. It's because I still see myself as I was. I think that's why I can't stand nudity—like doing nudity, in fact. It's like getting back at all those people who teased me or ignored me back then. I'm very proud of my body. Being naked in a scene, on a set, that doesn't scare me. What scares me is how I look! Can you see rolls of fat here? Dimples there? So I work out at the gym a lot."

So Slater's "topless himbo" days are behind her, but she doesn't rule out baring all.

"That's not to say I would not do nudity now, not at all. I do want roles that get me noticed. The lesbian scene in MIND TWISTER is the thing that people talk about. And if they're talking about you, it can't be bad. They'll ask,

'Who is that girl?' So I'll do parts in horror pictures, if it's a good role. But I'd prefer to play sexy to playing scared."

"Besides," she added, "I'd look better naked than screaming. And when you're acting, you're always naked."

ANDY SIDARIS

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iba Bay Films. Andy and Arlene Sidaris will executive produce the new series.

"We're surrounding them with a lot of our people—our director of photography, our lighting people and our wardrobe people," said Sidaris.

Will Sidaris miss directing? "It's like when I left ABC," he said. "After doing about 35 years of sports, I signed right into doing [film-making] full time. It didn't bother me at all. I'd like to be able to go back to Paris and Greece, and spend a week or two not looking at the clock. We have a place in Maui we go to when we want to rest, and I was able to sleep until 7:30, instead of 5:30, and believe me, I got used to it."

TRACI LORDS

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ing memorable appearances on WISEGUY, MARRIED WITH CHILDREN and MACGYVER. She also starred in direct-to-video productions including SHOCK 'EM DEAD, RAW NERVE, LASSER MOON and a TIME

TO DIE. Reviewers noted her transition from self-parody, projecting a tongue-in-cheek nymphomaniac while testing the mainstream, to later honing her skills as a serious actress. "The critics," said Lords, "have been very kind to me."

After playing INTENT TO KILL's vigilante, and a French maid named Miss Tress ("She was fun to play—poofy pink skirts and powder puffs") in THE NUTTY NUT, Lords signed up for SKINNER. The film has already been gauged as a risk for the actress, something that may disturb her public...and, in the process, sink her "former porn queen" label once and for all.

Next issue, the Traci Lords story continues with our coverage of SKINNER, Leeds' foray into horror film territory. Don't miss it!

ROBEY, RED HOT

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Phew, along with a cassette of Robey reading his poetry. Ironically, Beemster wasn't aware that Robey is a lifelong devotee of the art and a direct descendant of Robert Burns, the Bard of Scotland. After reading Beemster's work, she was delighted to participate in the event. The book, due to hit bookstores in late March 1993, will be illustrated with photos of Robey and the poet.

Though locked into these creative endeavors, Robey may return to the antique shop. "I would push for a reunion movie of FRIDAY THE 13TH: THE SERIES," she winked. "But not right away. In the future sometime. I think that would be kind of fun. Suspension of belief always is. We all need a weekly dose of that."

DEBRA LAMB

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up getting on top of the desk and dancing. I just became wacky, and they loved me so much they said, 'Okay, you can be the game show hostess.' Then I said, 'By the way, I also eat fire,' so they tried to fit it into the story somewhere, and it worked out okay."

Lamb credits her appearance in WILD AT HEART (1990) to the casting director's inspiration. "My friend Margaret Kravitz was doing the extra casting. They

weren't looking for a fire-
enter, but David Lynch had a
fire theme throughout the
film, so Margaret suggested
me, and he loved the idea."
She also spit fire at Kenny
Reeves in **POINT BREAK**
(1990), but has drawn the line
on her incendiary talent. "It's
one thing to be a fire-enter for
David Lynch, but people start
to think of you as some kind of
crazy person. They get so ex-
cited about it that they forget
I'm a professional dancer and
actress. I've had cases where
they rock their heads trying
to fit fire-entering into a movie
role. Oh, you're president of a
bank, and, all of a sudden,
you spit fire! No thanks!"

While trying to liberate
himself from stereotype, Lamb
acknowledges her low-budget
credits have earned her some
recognition. "I was working on
some project when someone
named a couple of films I'd
done, and asked for my auto-
graph," she related. "I was so
shocked. I thought, 'You've
got to be kidding. That's how
you spend your time, watch-
ing cable all night long!' Those
films were a great experience,
and they were fun. But now I
find myself doing the same
thing over and over, so I want
to do something else. All I
want to do is good work, to be
known by directors as a good,
solid actress."

BABYLON 5 BABES

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Yamata read for the role on
DEEP SPACE NINE eventu-
ally played by Terry Par-
nell, that of a paramanic alien
attached to a host body. "They
said I didn't have enough,"
recalled Yamata of the audi-
tion. "No problem with me. I
thought the show looked like
the lines of **STAR TREK**, without
anything new. As for **TIME**
TRAX, when I found out I had
to move to Australia, my en-
thusiasm for the project
waned. I don't. You get the
point."

Back on the **BABYLON 5**
set, her energy is focused on
trying to find out what makes
Laurel Takishima tick, and
nurturing the rapport with
her professional family.

"The first day we all
worked together was in-
credibly exciting," Yamata
admitted. "I referred to Joe as
God—because this is his uni-
verse. He literally created it.
It's all coming to fruition and
it's wonderfully exciting for

him, and for us."

CHILLER THEATRE III

continued from page 33

NESS, performed a pratfall
in the hotel lobby. Veronica
Carlson, aware of Campbell's
fondness for slapstick,
howled. One of the hotel
clerks, presumably unfamiliar
with the actor's antics, feared a
lawsuit.

Femme Fatales editor Bill
George arranged for a "still
photo" shoot of Monique Gar-
brielle. Earlier in the day, **FF**
photographer Vinnie Mizzi
scouted out a location on the
hotel's second floor. The ac-
tress was clad in a gown with
a low-cut V-neckline, espe-
cially selected for her convention
tenure. "Bill, I feel a little
conspicuous walking around
the hotel in this dress," said
Gabrielle as she was whisked
to the makeshift studio.
"Don't worry, we'll wrap this
thing up in no time," replied a
confident George. "Besides,
everybody's at the convention
hall. Nobody's going to notice
you." Gabrielle and George
took the escalator to the sec-
ond floor, and were immedi-
ately greeted by an Afro-
American Catholic congre-
gation, organized to celebrate
Mass. George shot a glance at
Gabrielle's plunging neckline
and shot another glance at
the worshippers. "Whoops...
sorry," he whispered. Gar-
brielle preferred to bluff their
way out of an embarrassing
situation. "Good afternoon,
she smiled at the gathering.
"Are we late for the service?"

Chiller's "coming attrac-
tions" (May 15 & 16, 1990).
Chiller Theatre's Grand
High Exalted Mystic Ruler,
Kevin Clement, has signed a
"1993 Femme Fatales Spec-
tacular" for the Spring re-
union. Among the guests:
Susanne Slater and Dana
Sprei (both interviewed in
this issue), actress/writer Vi-
vian Schilling (profiled in **FF**
1-3), *Irish McCallis* (TV's
SHERENA, QUEEN OF THE
JUNGLE), and *Debbie Ro-*
ches (**FF** 1-3). Also on the
roster: producer/director Her-
schell G. Lewis (**BLOOD**
FEAST), actor Gunnar Has-
sen (**TEXAS CHAINSAW**
MARRIAGE), and artist Dave
Stevens. Be sure to go and
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inson University's Rothman
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CHILLER THEATRE IN

FEMMES FATALES FESTIVAL FRIES EAST COAST WITH B-QUEEN BLITZ

BY PHIL KRESKIN

"This convention blows 'em all away," grinned a 24-year-old attendant from Baltimore. "The celebrity guests, they're mostly female. Drop-dead gorgeous. Besides, it's not often you get to hear their point of view." Unfolding a British quad poster from *COUNTLESS DRACULA*, he raced into the crowd. "I've got to get this autographed. Later—" Welcome to the October 24-25, 1993 metallurgy of Chiller Theatre Toy, Model and Film Expo.

Manique Gabrielle (*FF* 1-2), one of the celebrity guests, was seated with her personal manager, Tony Angove. The couple developed their own merchandising unit, printing a profusion of glamsour/cheesecake stills. "People come up to me with pictures that I never authorized, like the 'bed' shot from *AMAZON WOMEN ON THE MOON*," explained the actress. "We thought it was about time I profit from my own popularity, so I posed for studio shots."

Among the hot sellers was a vampy photo of Gabrielle, clad in a criss-cross bikini top. "Yeh, asses are terrific," smiled Gabrielle, "but when the men talk to me, they generally don't discuss the sexy stuff. They admire my comedic ability in films like *EVIL TOONS*, which was shown on the Joe Bob Briggs show."

Mesavhale, Hammer heroine Ingrid Pitt (*FF* 1-3)



Ingrid Pitt & Veronica Carlson; their first convention appearance together

and Veronica Carlson (*FF* 1-1) were autographing vintage posters and lobby cards. A couple of fans submitted U.S. one-sheets from *DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE* for Carlson's signature. The poster's graphics turned the film into a besouffle draw, a beaomy model, photographed from nose to cleavage, wears little more than a bandage on her neck.

One problem: some of the autograph-seeking fans assumed the model was Carlson, but the beautiful blonde denied she posed for the poster. Another fan timidly asked Pitt to sign a nude photo of herself from *THE VAMPIRE LOVERS*. "If it bothers you," he gulped, "I'll get another still." "Not at all, I love my body," replied Pitt with a mischievous smile. "That makes two of us," nodded her admirer.

Backstage belles: Debbie Rochon (right) Femmes Fatales' New York correspondent, posing with model Alison Woodward (left)



Manique Gabrielle cut a voluptuous figure, but male admirers showed respect.

Producer/director Fred Olen Ray (*FF* 1:1) autographed *HOLLYWOOD CHAINSAW HOOKERS* posters and copies of his book, *The New Poverty Row* (McFarland Press). Robert Quarry (*COUNT YORGA, VAMPIRE*), frequently engaged for Ray's movies, recalled the good old days of working with Vincent Price, his *MADHOUSE* and *DOCTOR PHIBBS RISES AGAIN* co-star. The balance of the screen talent included Robert Clarke (star of *THE MAN FROM PLANET X*, *THE HIDEOUS SUN DEMON*, et al.), New York model Alison Woodward (*FF* 1-3), Rhine Home Video mogul Johnny Legend, actress/Femmes Fatales spokesperson Debbie Rochon and TV host Zacherie.

Celebrity scribes included F. Paul Wilson (*The Keep*), Matthew Costello (*Warm*), Douglas E. Winter (*Art of Darkness*), Jack Ketchum (*Off Season*) and Gore Gazette editor Rick Sullivan, who also served as panel moderator. Artists Gahan Wilson and Steve Bissette signed samples of their work.

What the audiences didn't see—

Bruce Campbell, on hand to preview *ARMY OF DARK-*

continued on page 62

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